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# THE BLACK DEATH:

AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEADLY PESTILENCE OF THE FOURTEENTH CENTURY.

By J. F. C. HECKER, M.D.

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TRANSLATED FOR THE SYDENHAM SOCIETY OF LONDON

By B. G. BABINGTON, M.D., F.R.S.

## PREFACE.

WE here find an important page of the history of the world laid open to our view. It treats of a convulsion of the human race, unequaled in violence and extent. It speaks of incredible disasters, of despair and unbridled demoniacal passions. It shows us the abyss of general licentiousness, in consequence of a universal pestilence, which extended from China to Iceland and Greenland.

The inducement to unveil this image of an age, long since gone by, is evident. A new pestilence [the Cholera] has attained almost an equal extent, and though less formidable, has partly produced, partly indicated, similar phenomena. Its causes, and its diffusion over Asia and Europe, call on us to take a comprehensive view of it, because it leads to an insight into the organism of the world, in which the sum of organic life is subject to the great powers of Nature.

Now, human knowledge is not yet sufficiently advanced, to discover the connection between the processes which occur above, and those which occur below, the surface of the earth, or even fully to explore those laws of nature, an acquaintance with which would be required; far less to apply them to great phenomena, in which one spring sets a thousand others in motion.

On this side, therefore, such a point of view is not to be found, if we would not lose ourselves in the wilderness of conjectures, of which the world is already too full: but it may be found in the ample and productive field of historical research.

History—that mirror of human life in all its bearings, offers, even for general pestilences, an inexhaustible, though scarcely explored, mine of facts; here too it asserts its dignity, as the philosophy of reality delighting in truth.

It is conformable to its spirit to



conceive general pestilences as events affecting the whole world—to explain their phenomena by the comparison of what is similar. Thus the facts speak for themselves, because they appear to have proceeded from those higher laws which govern the progression of the existence of mankind. A cosmical origin and convulsive excitement, productive of the most important consequences among the nations subject to them, are the most striking features to which history points in all general pestilences. These, however, assume very different forms, as well in their attacks on the general organism, as in their diffusion; and in this respect a development from form to form, in the course of centuries, is manifest, so that the history of the world is divided into grand periods in which positively defined pestilences prevailed. As far as our chronicles extend, more or less certain information can be obtained respecting them.

But this part of medical history, which has such a manifold and powerful influence over the history of the world, is yet in its infancy. For the honor of that science which should everywhere guide the actions of mankind, we are induced to express a wish, that it may find room to flourish amidst the rank vegetation with which the field of German medical science is unhappily encumbered.

## CHAPTER I.

### GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.

THAT Omnipotence which has called the world with all its living creatures into one animated being, especially reveals himself in the desolation of great pestilences. The powers of creation come into violent collision; the sultry dryness of the atmosphere; the subterraneous thunders; the mist of overflowing waters, are the harbingers of destruction. Nature is not satisfied with the ordinary alternations of life and death,

and the destroying angel waves over man and beast his flaming sword.

These revolutions are performed in vast cycles, which the spirit of man, limited, as it is, to a narrow circle of perception, is unable to explore. They are, however, greater terrestrial events than any of those which proceed from the discord, the distress, or the passions of nations. By annihilations they awaken new life; and when the tumult above and below the earth is past, nature is renovated, and the mind awakens from torpor and depression to the consciousness of a higher destiny.

Were it in any degree within the power of human research to draw up, in a vivid and connected form, an historical sketch of such mighty events, after the manner of the historians of wars and battles, and the migrations of nations, we might then arrive at clear views with respect to the mental development of the human race, and the ways of Providence would be more plainly discernible. It would then be demonstrable, that the mind of nations is deeply affected by the destructive conflict of the powers of nature, and that great disasters lead to striking changes in general civilization. For all that exists in man, whether good or evil, is rendered conspicuous by the presence of great danger. His inmost feelings are roused—the thought of self-preservation masters his spirit—self-denial is put to severe proof, and wherever darkness and barbarism prevail, there the affrighted mortal flies to the idols of his superstition, and all laws, human and divine, are criminally violated.

In conformity with a general law of nature, such a state of excitement brings about a change, beneficial or detrimental, according to circumstances, so that nations either attain a higher degree of moral worth, or sink deeper in ignorance and vice. All this, however, takes place upon a much grander scale than through the ordinary vicissitudes of war and peace, or the rise and fall of empires, because the powers of nature themselves pro-

duce plagues, and subjugate the human will, which, in the contentions of nations, alone predominates.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE DISEASE.

THE most memorable example of what has been advanced, is afforded by a great pestilence of the fourteenth century, which desolated Asia, Europe, and Africa, and of which the people yet preserve the remembrance in gloomy traditions. It was an oriental plague, marked by inflammatory boils and tumors of the glands, such as break out in no other febrile disease. On account of these inflammatory boils, and from the black spots, indicative of a putrid decomposition, which appeared upon the skin, it was called in Germany and in the northern kingdoms of Europe, *the Black Death*, and in Italy, *la Mortalegra Grande*, *the Great Mortality*.\* Few testimonies are presented to us respecting its symptoms and its course, yet these are sufficient to throw light upon the form of the malady, and they are worthy of credence, from their co-incidence with the signs of the same disease in modern times.

The imperial author, Cantacuzenus,†

\* *La Mortalegra Grande*. *Matth. de Griffonibus*. apud Muratori, Script. rer. Italicar. T. XVIII. p. 167. D. It was called by others *Anguinalgia*. *Andr. Gratiol.* Discorso di Peste. Venet. 1576. 4to. Swedish: *Digerdöden*. *Loccenii* Histor. Suecan. L. III. p. 104.—Danish: *den sorte Dod*. *Pontan.* Rer. Danicar. Histor. L. VIII. p. 476. Amstelod. 1631, fol. Icelandic: *Svartur Daudi*. *Saabye*, Tagebuch in Grönland. Introduction XVIII. *Mansa*, de Epidemiis maxime memorabilibus, quæ in Dania grassatæ sunt, &c. Part I. p. 12. Havniæ, 1831-8.—In Westphalia the name of *de groete Doet* was prevalent. *Meibom.*

† *Joann. Cantacuzen.* Historiar. L. IV. c. 8. Ed. Paris, p. 730. 5. The ex-emperor has indeed copied some passages from Thucydides, as *Sprengel* justly observes (*Beiträge zur Geschichte der Medicin*. Vol. I. p. 73), though this was most probably only for the sake of rounding a period. This is no detri-

whose own son, Andronicus, died of this plague in Constantinople, notices great imposthumes\* of the thighs and arms of those affected, which, when opened, afforded relief by the discharge of an offensive matter. Bubbles, which are the infallible signs of the oriental plague, are thus plainly indicated, for he makes separate mention of smaller boils on the arms and in the face, as also in other parts of the body, and clearly distinguishes these from the blisters,† which are no less produced by plague in all its forms. In many cases, black spots‡ broke out all over the body, either single, or united and confluent.

These symptoms were not all found in every case. In many one alone was sufficient to cause death, while some patients recovered, contrary to expectation, though afflicted with all. Symptoms of cephalic affection were frequent; many patients became stupefied and fell into a deep sleep, losing also their speech from palsy of the tongue. [This mention of palsy of the tongue as a symptom in the Black Death, occurs also in Procopius's account of the plague in the 6th century, where it is said to be a sequel of the plague, so that patients who recovered, thereafter as long as they lived stuttered in their speech, or could utter only inarticulate sounds.] Others remained sleepless and without rest. The fauces and tongue were black, and as if suffused with blood; no beverage would assuage their burning thirst, so that their sufferings continued without alleviation until terminated by death, which many in their despair accelerated with their own hands. Contagion was evident, for attendants caught the disease of their relations and friends, and many houses in the capital were bereft even of their last inhabitant. Thus far only the usual symptoms of the oriental plague appeared. Still deeper sufferings, how-

ment to his credibility, because his statements accord with the other accounts.

\* Ἀποστάσεις μεγάλαι.

† Μελαίναι φλυκτίδες.

‡ ὥσπερ στίγματα μέλανα.



ever, were connected with this pestilence, such as have not been felt at other times; the organs of respiration were seized with a putrid inflammation; a violent pain in the chest attacked the patient; blood was expectorated, and the breath diffused a pestiferous odor.

In the West, the following were the predominating symptoms on the eruption of this disease.\* An ardent fever, accompanied by an evacuation of blood, proved fatal in the first three days. It appears that buboes and inflammatory boils did not at first come out at all, but that the disease, in the form of [pestilential] affection of the lungs, completed the destruction of life before the other symptoms were developed. Thus did the plague rage in Avignon for six or eight weeks, and the pestilential breath of the sick, who expectorated blood, caused a terrible contagion far and near; for even the vicinity of those who had fallen ill of plague was certain death;† so that parents abandoned their infected children, and all the ties of kindred were dissolved. After this period, buboes in the axilla and in the groin, and inflammatory boils all over the body, made their appearance; but it was not until seven months afterward that some patients recovered with matured buboes, as in the ordinary milder form of plague. Such is the report of the courageous Guy de Chauliac, who vindicated the honor of medicine, by bidding defiance to danger; boldly and constantly assisting the affected, and disdaining the excuse of his colleagues, who held the Arabian notion, that medical aid was unavailing, and that the contagion justified flight. He saw the plague twice in Avignon, first in the year 1348, from January to August,

and then twelve years later, in the autumn, when it returned from Germany, and for nine months spread general distress and terror. The first time it raged chiefly among the poor, but in the year 1360, more among the higher classes. It now also destroyed a great many children, whom it had formerly spared, and but few women.

The like was seen in Egypt.\* Here also inflammation of the lungs was predominant, and destroyed quickly and infallibly, with burning heat and expectoration of blood. Here too the breath of the sick spread a deadly contagion, and human aid was as vain as it was fatal to those who approached the infected.

Boccaccio, who was an eye-witness of its incredible fatality in Florence, the seat of the revival of science, gives a more lively description of the attack of the disease than his non-medical contemporaries.†

It commenced here, not, as in the East, with bleeding at the nose, a sure sign of inevitable death; but there took place at the beginning, both in men and women, tumors in the groin and in the axilla, varying in circumference up to the size of an apple or an egg, and called by the people pest-boils (*gavoccioli*). Then there appeared similar tumors indiscriminately over all parts of the body, and black or blue spots came out on the arms or thighs, or on other parts, either single and large, or small and thickly studded. These spots proved equally fatal with the pest-boils, which had been from the first regarded as a sure sign of death. No power of medicine brought relief—almost all died within the first three days, some sooner, some later, after the appearance of these signs, and for the most part entirely without fever or other symptoms. The plague spread with the greater fury, as it communicated from the sick to the healthy, like fire among dry and oily fuel, and even contact with the clothes and

\* *Guidon. de Cauliac* Chirurgia. Tract II. c. 5. p. 113. Ed. Lugdun. 1572.

† Et fuit tantæ contagiositatis specialiter quæ fuit cum sputo sanguinis, quod non solum morando, sed etiam inspicendo unus recipiebat ab alio: intantum quod gentes moriebantur sine servitoribus, et sepeliebantur sine sacerdotibus, pater non visitabat filium, nec filius patrem: charitas erat mortua, spes prostrata.

\* *Deguignes*, Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mongols, etc. Tom. IV. Paris, 1758. 4to. p. 226.

† *Decameron*. Giorn. I. Introd.



other articles which had been used by the infected seemed to convey the disease. Not only men, but animals, fell sick and shortly expired, if they had touched things belonging to the diseased or dead. Thus Boccaccio himself saw two hogs on the rags of a person who had died of plague, after staggering about for a short time, fall down dead, as if they had taken poison. In other places multitudes of dogs, cats, fowls, and other animals, fell victims to the contagion;\* and it is to be presumed that other epizootics likewise were developed, although the ignorant writers of the fourteenth century are silent on this point.

In Germany there was a repetition in every respect of the same phenomena. The infallible signs of the oriental bubo-plague with its inevitable contagion were found there as everywhere else; but the mortality was not nearly so great as in the other parts of Europe.† The accounts do not all make mention of the spitting of blood, the diagnostic symptom of this fatal pestilence; we are not, however, thence to conclude that there was any considerable mitigation or modification of the disease, for we must not only take into account the defectiveness of the chronicles, but that isolated testimonies are often contradicted by many others. Thus, the chronicles of Strasburg, which only take notice of boils and glandular swellings in the axillæ and groins,‡ are opposed by another account, according to which the mortal spitting of blood was met with in Germany; § but this is rendered sus-

picious, as the narrator postpones the death of those who were thus affected, to the sixth, and (even the) eighth day, whereas no other author sanctions so long a course of the disease; and even in Strasburg, where a mitigation of the plague may, with most probability, be assumed, since in the year 1349 only 16,000 people were carried off, the generality expired by the third or fourth day.\* In Austria, and especially in Vienna, the plague was fully as malignant as anywhere, so that the patients who had red spots and black boils, as well as those afflicted with tumid glands, died about the third day;† and lastly, very frequent sudden deaths occurred on the coasts of the North Sea and in Westphalia, without any further development of the malady.‡

To France, this plague came in a northern direction from Avignon, and was there more destructive than in Germany, so that in many places not more than two in twenty of the inhabitants survived. Many were struck, as if by lightning, and died on the spot, and this more frequently among the young and strong than the old; patients with enlarged glands in the axillæ and groins scarcely survived two or three days; and no sooner did these fatal signs appear, than they bid adieu to the world, and sought consolation only in the absolution which Pope Clement VI. promised them in the hour of death.§

In England the malady appeared, as at Avignon, with spitting of blood, and with the same fatality, so that the sick who were afflicted either with this symptom or with vomiting of blood, died in some cases immediately, in others within twelve hours, or at the

\* *Auger. de Biterris, Vitæ Romanor. pontificum, apud Muratori, Scriptor. rer. Italic. Vol. III. Pt. II. p. 536.*

† *Contin. altera Chronici Guillelmi de Nangis in d'Acher, Spicilegium sive Collectio Veterum Scriptorum, etc. Ed. de la Barre, Tom. III. p. 110.*

‡ "The people all died of boils and inflamed glands which appeared under the arms and in the groins." *Jac. v. Königshoven, the oldest Chronicle of Alsace and Strasburg, and indeed of all Germany. Strasburg, 1698. 4. cap. 5, § 86. p. 301.*

§ *Hainr. Rebdorff, Annales, apud Marq. Freher. Germanicarum rerum Scriptores. Francof. 1624. fol. p. 439.*

\* *Königshoven, in loc. cit.*

† *Anonym. Leobiens. Chron. L. VI. in Hier. Pes, Scriptor. rer. Austriac. Lips. 1721. fol. Tom. I. p. 970.* The above-named appearances are here called, *rote sprinkel, swarze erhubenn und druesz under den üchsen und se den gemächten.*

‡ *Ubb. Emmii Rer. Frisiacar. histor. L. XIV. p. 203. Lugd. Bat. 1616. fol.*

§ *Guillelmus de Nangis, loc. cit.*

latest, in two days.\* The inflammatory boils and buboes in the groins and axillæ were recognized at once as prognosticating a fatal issue, and those were past all hope of recovery in whom they arose in numbers all over the body. It was not till toward the close of the plague that they ventured to open, by incision, these hard and dry boils, when matter flowed from them in small quantity, and thus by compelling nature to a critical suppuration, many patients were saved. Every spot which the sick had touched, their breath, their clothes, spread the contagion; and, as in all other places, the attendants and friends who were either blind to their danger or heroically despised it, fell a sacrifice to their sympathy. Even the eyes of the patient were considered as sources of contagion,† which had the power of acting at a distance, whether on account of their unwonted luster or the distortion which they always suffer in plague, or whether in conformity with an ancient notion, according to which the sight was considered as the bearer of a demoniacal enchantment. Flight from infected cities seldom availed the fearful, for the germ of the disease adhered to them, and they fell sick, remote from assistance, in the solitude of their country houses.

Thus did the plague spread over England with unexampled rapidity, after it had first broken out in the county of Dorset, whence it advanced through the counties of Devon and Somerset, to Bristol, and thence reached Gloucester, Oxford, and London. Probably few places escaped, perhaps not any; for the annals of contemporaries report that throughout the land only a tenth part of the inhabitants remained alive.‡

\* *Ant. Wood*, *Historia et Antiquitates Universit. Oxoniens.* Oxon. 1764. fol. L. i. p. 172.

† *Mézeray*, *Histoire de France.* Paris, 1685. fol. T. II. p. 418.

‡ *Barnes*, who has given a lively picture of the black plague, in England, taken from the Registers of the 14th century, describes the external symptoms in the following terms: knobs or swellings in the groin or under the

From England the contagion was carried by a ship to Bergen, the capital of Norway, where the plague then broke out in its most frightful form, with vomiting (or rather coughing) of blood; and throughout the whole country, spared not more than a third of the inhabitants. The sailors found no refuge in their ships; and vessels were often seen driving about on the ocean and drifting on shore, whose crews had perished to the last man.\*

In Poland the infected were attacked with spitting of blood, and died in a few days in such vast numbers, that, as it has been affirmed, scarcely a fourth of the inhabitants were left.†

Finally, in Russia the plague appeared two years later than in Southern Europe; again with the same symptoms as elsewhere. Russian contemporaries have recorded that it began with rigor, heat, and darting pain in the shoulders and back; that it was accompanied by spitting of blood, and terminated fatally in two, or at most three, days. It is not till the year 1360 that we find buboes mentioned as occurring in the neck, in the axillæ, and in the groins, which are stated to have broken out when the spitting of blood had continued some time. According to the experience of Western Europe, however, it cannot be assumed that these symptoms did not appear at an earlier period.‡

Thus much, from authentic sources, on the nature of the Black Death. The descriptions which have been

armpits, called kernels, biles, blains, blisters, pimples, wheals, or plague-sores. The Hist. of Edw. III. Cambridge, 1688 fol. p. 432.

\* *Torfaus*, *Historia rerum Norvegicarum.* Hafn. 1711. fol. L. IX. c. 8. p. 478. This author has followed *Pontanus* (*Rerum Danicar. Historia*, Amstelod. 1631. fol.), who has given only a general account of the plague in Denmark, and nothing respecting its symptoms.

† *Drugoss*. See Longini *Histor. polonic.* L. XII. Lips. 1711. fol. T. I. p. 1086.

‡ *W. M. Richter*, *Geschichte der Medicin in Russland.* Moskwa, 1813, 8. p. 215. *Richter* has taken his information on the Black Death in Russia, from authentic Russian MSS.



communicated contain, with a few unimportant exceptions, all the symptoms of the oriental plague which have been observed in more modern times. No doubt can obtain on this point. The facts are placed clearly before our eyes. We must, however, bear in mind that this violent disease does not always appear in the same form, and that while the essence of the poison which it produces, and which is excreted so abundantly from the body of the patient, remains unchanged, it is proteiform in its varieties, from the almost imperceptible vesicle, unaccompanied by fever, which exists for some time before it extends its poison inward, and then excites fever and buboes, to the fatal form in which carbuncular inflammations fall upon the most important viscera.

Such was the form which the plague assumed in the 14th century, for the accompanying chest affection which appeared in all the countries whereof we have received any account, cannot, on a comparison with similar and familiar symptoms, be considered as any other than the inflammation of the lungs of modern medicine,\* a disease which at present only appears sporadically, and owing to a putrid decomposition of the fluids, is probably combined with hemorrhages from the vessels of the lungs. Now, as every carbuncle [focus of localization. *Hirsch*], whether it be cutaneous or internal, generates in abundance the matter of contagion which has given rise to it, so, therefore, must the breath of the affected have been poisonous in this plague, and on this account its power of contagion wonderfully increased; wherefore the opinion appears incontrovertible, that as the number of the stricken increased, not

only individual chambers and houses, but whole cities were infected, which, moreover, in the middle ages, were with few exceptions, closely built, kept in a filthy state, and surrounded with stagnant ditches.\* Flight was, in consequence, of no avail to the timid; for even though they had sedulously avoided all communication with the diseased and the suspected, yet their clothes were saturated with the pestiferous atmosphere, and every inspiration imparted to them the seeds of the destructive malady, which, in the greater number of cases, germinated all too readily. Add to which, the usual propagation of the plague through clothes, beds, and a thousand other things to which the pestilential poison adheres,—a propagation, which, from want of caution, must have been infinitely multiplied; and since articles of this kind, removed from the access of air, not only retain the matter of contagion for an indefinite period, but also increase its activity frightful ill-consequences followed for many years after the first fury of the pestilence was past.

The affection of the stomach, often mentioned in vague terms, and occasionally as a vomiting of blood, was doubtless only a subordinate symptom, even if it be admitted that actual hematemesis did occur. For the difficulty of distinguishing a flow of blood from the stomach, from a pulmonic expectoration of blood is, to non-medical men, even in common cases, not inconsiderable. How much greater then must it have been in so terrible a disease, where assistants could not venture to approach the sick without exposing themselves to certain death? Only two medical descriptions,† of the malady have reached us, the one by the brave *Guy de Chauliac*, the other by *Raymond Chalin de Vinario*, a very experienced scholar, who was

\* Compare on this point, *Balling's* treatise "Zur Diagnostik der Lungenerweichung." Vol. XVI. ii. 3. p. 257 of litt. Annalen der ges. Heilkunde. [But Dr. *August Hirsch*, Hecker's latest editor, says the lung affection was *Hemorrhagic Pneumonia*, which is very frequently observed in typhoid fevers and particularly in *Typhus exanthematicus*. This observation, he adds, is confirmed by experience with the Indian plague.]

\* It is expressly stated by *Chalin de Vinario*, with respect to Avignon and Paris, that uncleanness of the streets increased the plague considerably.

[† But *Hirsch* names seven other medical accounts.]

well versed in the learning of his time. The former takes notice only of fatal coughing of blood; the latter, besides this, notices bleeding at the nose, bloody urine and fluxes of blood from the bowels, as symptoms of such decided and speedy mortality, that those patients in whom they were observed, usually died on the same or the following day.\*

That a vomiting of blood may not, here and there, have taken place, perhaps have been even prevalent in many places, is, from a consideration of the nature of the disease, by no means to be denied: for every putrid decomposition of the fluids begets a tendency to hemorrhages of all kinds. Here, however, it is a question of historical certainty, which, after these doubts, is by no means established. Had not so speedy a death followed the expectoration of blood, we should certainly have received more detailed intelligence respecting other hemorrhages; but the malady had no time to extend its effects further over the extremities of the vessels. After its first fury, however, was spent, the pestilence passed into the usual febrile form of the oriental plague. Internal carbuncular inflammations no longer took place, and hemorrhages became phenomena, no more essential in this than they are in any other febrile disorders. Chalin, who observed not only the *great mortality* of 1348, and the plague of 1360, but also that of 1373 and 1382, speaks moreover of

*affections of the throat*, and describes the *black spots* of plague patients more satisfactorily than any of his contemporaries. The former appeared but in few cases, and consisted in carbuncular inflammation of the gullet, with a difficulty of swallowing, even to suffocation,\* to which, in some instances, was added inflammation of the ceruminous glands of the ears, with tumors, producing great deformity. Such patients, as well as others, were affected with expectoration of blood; but they did not usually die before the sixth, and sometimes even so late as the fourteenth, day.† The same occurrence, it is well known, is not uncommon in other pestilences; as also blisters on the surface of the body, in different places, in the vicinity of which, tumid glands and inflammatory boils, surrounded by discolored and black streaks, arose, and thus indicated the reception of the poison. These streaked spots were called, by an apt comparison, *the girdle*, and this appearance was justly considered extremely dangerous.‡

[\*No doubt *Diphtheria* is here meant *Hirsch.*]—J. F.

† *Dalechamp*, p. 205—where, and at pp. 32-36, the plague-eruptions are mentioned in the usual indefinite terms: *Exanthemata viridia, cærulea, nigra, rubra, lata, diffusa, velut signata punctis*, etc.

‡ "Pestilentis morbi gravissimum symptoma est, quod zonam vulgo nuncupant. Ea sic fit: Pustulæ nonnunquam per febres pestilentes fuscæ, nigræ, lividæ existunt, in partibus corporis a glandularum emissariis se-junctis, ut in femore, tibia, capite, brachio, humeris, quarum fervore et caliditate succi corporis attracti, glandulas in trajectione replent, et attollunt, unde bubones fiunt atque carbunculi. Ab iis tanquam solidus quidam nervus in partem vicinam distentam ac veluti convulsione rigentem producit, puta brachium vel tibiam, nunc rubens, nunc fuscus, nunc obscurior, nunc virens, nunc iridis colore, duos vel quatuor digitos latus. Hujus summo, qua desinit in emissarium, plerumque tuberculum pestilens visitur, altero vero extremo, qua in propinquum membrum porrigitur, carbunculus. Hoc scilicet malum vulgus zonam cinctumve nominat, periculosum minus, cum hic tuberculo, illic carbunculo terminatur, quam si tuberculum in capite solum emineat." p. 198.

\* *De Peste Libri tres, opera Jacobi Dalechampii* in lucem editi. Lugduni, 1552. 16. p. 35. *Dalechamp* has only improved the language of this work, adding nothing to it but a preface in the form of two letters. *Raymond Chalin de Vinario* was contemporary with *Guy de Chauliac* at Avignon. He enjoyed a high reputation, and was in very affluent circumstances. He often makes mention of cardinals and high officers of the papal court, whom he had treated; and it is even probable, though not certain, that he was physician to Clement VI. (1342-1352), Innocent VI. (1352-1362), and Urban V. (1362-1370). He and *Guy de Chauliac* never mention each other.



## CHAPTER III.

## CAUSES.—SPREAD.

AN inquiry into the causes of the Black Death will not be without important results in the study of the plagues which have visited the world, although it cannot advance beyond generalities without entering upon a field hitherto uncultivated, and, to this hour, entirely unknown. Mighty revolutions in the organism of the earth, of which we have credible information, had preceded. From China to the Atlantic, the foundations of the earth were shaken,—throughout Asia and Europe the atmosphere was in commotion, and endangered, by its baneful influence, both vegetable and animal life.

The series of these great events began in the year 1333, fifteen years before the plague broke out in Europe: they first appeared in China. Here a parching drought, accompanied by famine, commenced in the tract of country watered by the rivers Kiang and Hoai. This was followed by such violent torrents of rain, in and about Kingsai, at that time the capital of the empire, that according to tradition more than 400,000 people perished in the floods. Finally the mountain Tsincheou fell in, and vast clefts were formed in the earth. In the succeeding year (1334), passing over fabulous traditions, the neighborhood of Canton was visited by inundations; whilst in Tche, after an unexampled drought, a plague arose, which is said to have carried off about 5,000,000 of people. A few months afterward an earthquake followed, at and near Kingsai; and subsequent to the falling in of the mountains of Ki-ming-chan, a lake was formed of more than a hundred leagues in circumference, where, again, thousands found their grave. In Houkouang and Ho-nan a drought prevailed for five months; and innumerable swarms of locusts destroyed the vegetation; while famine and pestilence, as usual, followed in their train. Connected accounts

of the condition of Europe before this great catastrophe are not to be expected from the writers of the fourteenth century. It is remarkable, however, that simultaneously with a drought and renewed floods in China, in 1336, many uncommon atmospheric phenomena, and in the winter frequent thunder storms, were observed in the north of France; and so early as the eventful year 1333, an eruption of Etna took place.\* According to the Chinese annals, about 4,000,000 people perished by famine in the neighborhood of Kiang in 1337: and deluges, swarms of locusts, and an earthquake which lasted six days, caused incredible devastation. In the same year, the first swarms of locusts appeared in Franconia, which were succeeded in the following year by myriads of these insects. In 1338, Kingsai was visited by an earthquake of ten days' duration; at the same time France suffered from a failure of the harvest; and thenceforth, till 1342, there was in China a constant succession of inundations, earthquakes, and famines. In the same year great floods occurred in the vicinity of the Rhine and in France, which could not be attributed to rain alone; for everywhere, even on the tops of mountains, springs were seen to burst forth, and dry tracts were laid under water in an inexplicable manner. In the following year, the mountain Hong-tchang, in China, fell in, and caused a destructive deluge; and in Pien-tcheou and Leang-tcheou, after three months' rain, there followed unheard-of inundations, which destroyed seven cities. In Egypt and Syria, violent earthquakes took place; and in China they became, from this time, more and more frequent: for they recurred, in 1344, in Ven-tcheou, where the sea overflowed in consequence; in 1345, in Ki-tcheou, and in both the following

\* V. Hoff, Geschichte der natürlichen Veränderungen der Erdoberfläche, II. p. 264. Gotha, 1824. This eruption was not succeeded by any other in the same century, either of Etna or of Vesuvius.

years in Canton, with subterraneous thunder. Meanwhile, floods and famine devastated various districts, until 1347, when the fury of the elements subsided in China.\*

The signs of terrestrial commotions commenced in Europe in the year 1348, after the intervening districts of country in Asia had probably been visited in the same manner. On the island of Cyprus, the plague from the East had already broken out; when an earthquake shook the foundations of the island, and was accompanied by so frightful a hurricane, that the inhabitants, who had slain their Mahometan slaves in order that they might not themselves be subjugated by them, fled in dismay, in all directions. The sea overflowed—the ships were dashed to pieces on the rocks, and few outlived the terrific event, whereby this fertile and blooming island was converted into a desert. Before the earthquake, a pestiferous wind spread so poisonous an odor, that many, being overpowered by it, fell down suddenly and expired in dreadful agonies.†

This phenomenon is one of the rarest that has ever been observed, for nothing is more constant than the composition of the air; and in no respect has nature been more careful in the preservation of organic life. Never have naturalists discovered in the atmosphere foreign elements, which, evident to the senses, and borne by the winds, spread from land to land, carrying disease over whole portions of the earth, as is recounted to have taken place in the year 1348. It is therefore, the more to be regretted, that in this extraordinary period, which, owing to the low condition of science, was very deficient in accurate observers, so little that can be depended on respecting those uncommon occurrences in the air, should have been recorded. Yet, German accounts say expressly, that a thick, stinking mist advanced

from the East, and spread itself over Italy;‡ and there could be no deception in so palpable a phenomenon. The credibility of unadorned traditions, however little they may satisfy physical research, can scarcely be called in question when we consider the connection of events; for just at this time earthquakes were more general than they had been within the range of history. In thousands of places chasms were formed, from whence arose noxious vapors; and as at that time natural occurrences were transformed into miracles, it was reported, that a fiery meteor, which descended on the earth far in the East, had destroyed everything within a circumference of more than a hundred leagues, infecting the air far and wide.† The consequences of innumerable floods contributed to the same effect; vast river districts had been converted into swamps; foul vapors arose everywhere, increased by the odor of putrified locusts, which had never perhaps darkened the sun in thicker swarms,‡ and of countless corpses, which, even in the well-regulated countries of Europe, they knew not how to remove quickly

\* "There were also many locusts which had been blown into the sea by a hurricane, and afterward cast dead upon the shore, and produced a noxious exhalation; and a dense and awful fog was seen in the heavens, rising in the East, and descending upon Italy." Mansfeld Chronicle, in M. Cyriac. Spangenberg, chap. 287, fol. 336. b. Eisleben, 1572. Compare Staind. Chron. (?) in Schnurrer: "Ingens vapor magnitudine horribili boreali movens, regionem, magno adspicientium terrore dilabitur," and Ad. von Lebenwaldt, Land-Stadt-und Hausarzney-Buch. fol. p. 15. Nuremberg, 1695, who mentions a dark, thick mist which covered the earth. Chalin expresses himself on this subject in the following terms:—"Cælum ingravescit, aer impurus sentitur: nubes erassa ac multa lumina cæli obstruunt, immundus ac ignavus tepor hominum emollit corpora, exoriens sol pallescit." p. 50.

† Mézeray, Histoire de France, Tom. II. 418. Paris, 1685. Compare Oudegheerst Chroniques de Flandres. Antwerp, 1571, 4 to. Chap. 175, f. 297 b.

‡ They spread in a direction from East to West, over most of the countries from which we have received intelligence. Anonym. Leobiens. Chron. loc. cit.

\* Deguignes, loc. cit. p. 226, from Chinese sources.

† Deguignes, ib. p. 225.

enough out of the sight of the living. It is probable, therefore, that the atmosphere contained foreign, and sensibly perceptible, admixtures to a great extent, which, at least in the lower regions, could not be decomposed, or rendered ineffective by separation.

Now, if we go back to the symptoms of the disease, the ardent inflammation of the lungs points out that the organs of respiration yielded to the attack of an atmospheric poison—a poison which, if we admit the independent origin of the Black Plague at any one place on the globe, which, under such extraordinary circumstances, it would be difficult to doubt, attacked the course of the circulation in as hostile a manner as that which produces inflammation of the spleen, and other animal contagions that cause swelling and inflammation of the lymphatic glands.

Pursuing the course of these grand revolutions further, we find notice of an unexampled earthquake, which on the 25th of January, 1348, shook Greece, Italy, and the neighboring countries. Naples, Rome, Pisa, Bologna, Padua, Venice, and many other cities suffered considerably: whole villages were swallowed up. Castles, houses, and churches were overthrown, and hundreds of people were buried beneath their ruins.\* In Carinthia, thirty villages, together with all the churches, were demolished; more than a thousand corpses were drawn out of the rubbish; the city of Villach was so completely destroyed, that very few of its inhabitants were saved; and when the earth ceased to tremble, it was found that mountains had been moved from their positions, and that many hamlets were left in ruins.† It is recorded that, during this earthquake, the wine in the casks became turbid, a statement which may be

considered as furnishing a proof that changes causing a decomposition of the atmosphere had taken place; but if we had no other information from which the excitement of conflicting powers of nature during these commotions might be inferred, yet scientific observations in modern times have shown, that the relation of the atmosphere to the earth is changed by volcanic influences. Why then, may we not, from this fact, draw retrospective inferences respecting those extraordinary phenomena?

Independently of this, however, we know that during this earthquake, the duration of which is stated by some to have been a week, and by others a fortnight, people experienced an unusual stupor and head-ache, and that many fainted away.\*

These destructive earthquakes extended as far as the neighborhood of Basle,† and recurred until the year 1360, throughout Germany, France, Silesia, Poland, England, and Denmark, and much further north.‡

Great and extraordinary meteors appeared in many places, and were regarded with superstitious horror. A pillar of fire, which on the 20th of December, 1348, remained for an hour at sunrise over the pope's palace in Avignon;§ a fireball, which in August of the same year was seen at sunset over Paris, and was distinguished from similar phenomena by its longer duration,|| not to mention other instances mixed up with wonderful prophecies and omens, are recorded in the chronicles of that age.

\* *Albert. Argentinienis. Chronic. in Urstis. Scriptor. rer. Germanic. Francof. 1585. fol. P. II. p. 147. Compare Chalin, loc. cit.*

† *Petrarch. Opera. Basil. 1554. fol. p. 210. Barnes, loc. cit. p. 431.*

‡ "Un tremblement de terre universel, mesme en France et aux pays septentrionaux, renversoit les villes toutes entières, déracinoit les arbres et les montagnes, et remplissoit les campagnes d'abysmes si profondes, qu'il sembloit que l'enfer eût voulu engloutir le genre humain." *Meseray, loc. cit. p. 41. Barnes, p. 431.*

§ *Villani, loc. cit. c. 119. p. 1000.*

|| *Guillelm. de Nangis, Cont. alt. Chro. loc. cit. p. 109.*

\* *Giov. Villani Istorie Fiorentine, L. XII. chap. 121, 122, in Muratori, T. XIII. pp. 1001, 1002. Compare Barnes, loc. cit. p. 430.*

† *J. Vitoduran. Chronicon, in Füssli. Thesaurus Histor. Helvet. Tigur. 1735. fol. p. 84.*



The order of the seasons seem to be inverted,—rains, floods, and failures of crops were so general, that few places were exempt from them; and though an historian of this century assures us that there was an abundance in the granaries and store-houses,\* all his contemporaries, with one voice, contradict him. The consequences of failure in the crops were soon felt, especially in Italy and the surrounding countries, where, in this year, a rain which continued for four months had destroyed the seed. In the larger cities, they were compelled, in the spring of 1347, to have recourse to a distribution of bread among the poor, particularly at Florence, where they erected large bake-houses, from which, in April, ninety-four thousand loaves of bread, each twelve ounces in weight, were daily dispensed.† It is plain, however, that humanity could only partially mitigate the general distress, not altogether obviate it.

Diseases, the invariable consequence of famine, broke out in the country, as well as in cities; children died of hunger in their mothers' arms,—want, misery, and despair, were general throughout Christendom.‡

Such are the events which took place before the eruption of the Black Plague in Europe. Contemporaries have explained them after their own manner, and have thus, like their posterity, under similar circumstances, given a proof that mortals possess neither senses nor intellectual powers sufficiently acute to comprehend the phenomena produced by the earth's organism, much less scientifically to understand their effects. Superstition, selfishness in a thousand forms, the presumption of the schools, laid hold of unconnected facts. They vainly thought to comprehend the

whole in the individual, and perceived not the universal spirit which, in intimate union with the mighty powers of nature, animates the movements of all existence, and permits not any phenomenon to originate from isolated causes. To attempt, five centuries after that age of desolation, to point out the causes of a cosmical commotion, which has never recurred to an equal extent,—to indicate scientifically the influences which called forth so terrific a poison in the bodies of men and animals, exceeds the limits of human understanding. If we are even now unable, with all the varied resources of an extended knowledge of nature, to define that condition of the atmosphere by which pestilences are generated, still less can we pretend to reason retrospectively from the nineteenth to the fourteenth century; but if we take a general view of the occurrences, that century will give us copious information, and, as applicable to all succeeding times, of high importance.

In the progress of connected natural phenomena, from East to West, that great law of nature is plainly revealed which has so often and evidently manifested itself in the earth's organism, as well as in the state of nations dependent upon it. In the inmost depths of the globe, that impulse was given in the year 1333, which in uninterrupted succession for six-and-twenty years shook the surface of the earth, even to the western shores of Europe. From the very beginning the air partook of the terrestrial concussion, atmospherical waters overflowed the land, or its plants and animals perished under the scorching heat. The insect tribe was wonderfully called into life, as if animated beings were destined to complete the destruction which astral and telluric powers had begun. Thus did this dreadful work of nature advance from year to year; it was a progressive infection of the zones, which exerted a powerful influence both above and beneath the surface

\* Ibid. p. 110.

† Villani, loc. cit. c. 72. p. 954.

‡ Anonym. Istorie Pistolesi, in *Muratori*, T. XI. p. 524. "Ne gli anni di Chr. 1346 et 1347, fu grandissima carestia in tutta la Christianità, in tanto che molta gente moria di fame, e fu grande mortalità in ogni paese del mondo."



of the earth; and after having been perceptible in slighter indications, at the commencement of the terrestrial commotions in China, convulsed the whole earth.

The nature of the first plague in China is unknown. We have no certain intelligence of the disease, until it entered the western countries of Asia. Here it showed itself as the oriental plague with inflammation of the lungs; in which form it probably also may have begun in China, that is to say, as a malady which spreads, more than any other, by contagion—a contagion, that, in ordinary pestilences, requires immediate contact, and only under unfavorable circumstances of rare occurrence is communicated by the mere approach to the sick. The share which this cause had in the spreading of the plague over the whole earth, was certainly very great; and the opinion that the Black Death might have been excluded from Western Europe, by good regulations, similar to those which are now in use, would have all the support of modern experience, provided it could be proved that this plague had been actually imported from the East; or that the oriental plague in general, whenever it appears in Europe, has its origin in Asia or Egypt. Such a proof, however, can by no means be produced so as to enforce conviction; for it would involve the impossible assumption, either that there is no essential difference between the degree of civilization of the European nations, in the most ancient and in modern times, or that detrimental influences, which have yielded only to the civilization of human society and the regular cultivation of countries, could not formerly keep up the glandular plague.

The plague was, however, known in Europe before nations were united by the bonds of commerce and social intercourse;\* hence there is ground

\* According to *Papon*, its origin is quite lost in the obscurity of remote ages; and even before the Christian Era, we are able to

for supposing that it sprung up spontaneously, in consequence of the rude manner of living and the uncultivated state of the earth; influences which peculiarly favor the origin of severe diseases. Now we need not go back to the earlier centuries, for the 14th itself, before it had half expired, was visited by five or six pestilences.\*

If, therefore, we consider the peculiar property of the plague, that, in countries which it has once visited, it remains for a long time in a milder form, and that the epidemic influences of 1342, when it had appeared for the last time, were particularly favorable to its unperceived continuance, till 1348, we come to the notion, that in this eventful year also, the germs of plague existed in Southern Europe, which might be vivified by atmospherical deteriorations; and that thus, at least in part, the Black Plague may have originated in Europe itself. The corruption of the atmosphere came from the East; but the disease itself came not upon the wings of the wind, but was only excited and increased by the atmosphere where it had previously existed.

This source of the Black Plague was not, however, the only one; for, far more powerful than the excitement of the latent elements of the plague by atmospheric influences, was the effect of the contagion communicated from one people to another, on the great roads, and in the harbors of the Mediterranean. From China, the route of the caravans lay to the north of the Caspian Sea, through Central Asia to Tauris. Here ships were ready to take the produce of the East to Constanti-

trace many references to former pestilences. De la peste, ou époques mémorables de ce fléau, et les moyens de s'en préserver. T. II. Paris, An VIII. de la rép. 8.

\* 1301, in the South of France; 1311, in Italy; 1316, in Italy, Burgundy, and Northern Europe; 1335, the locust year, in the middle of Europe; 1340, in Upper Italy; 1342, in France; and 1347, in Marseilles and most of the larger islands of the Mediterranean. Ibid. T. II. p. 273.

nople, the capital of commerce, and the medium of connection between Asia, Europe, and Africa.\* Other caravans went from India to Asia Minor, and touched at the cities south of the Caspian Sea, and lastly from Bagdad, through Arabia to Egypt; also the maritime communication on the Red Sea, from India to Arabia and Egypt, was not inconsiderable. In all these directions contagion made its way; and doubtless, Constantinople and the harbors of Asia Minor, are to be regarded as the foci of infection; whence it radiated to the most distant seaports and islands.

To Constantinople, the plague had been brought from the northern coast of the Black Sea,† after it had depopulated the countries between those routes of commerce; and appeared as early as 1347, in Cyprus, Sicily, Marseilles, and some of the seaports of Italy. The remaining islands of the Mediterranean, particularly Sardinia, Corsica, and Majorca, were visited in succession. Foci of contagion existed also in full activity along the whole southern coast of Europe; when, in January, 1348, the plague appeared in Avignon,‡ and in other cities in the south of France and north of Italy, as well as in Spain.

The precise days of its eruption in the individual towns are no longer to be ascertained; but it was not simultaneous; for in Florence the disease appeared in the beginning of April; § in Cesena, the 1st of June; || and place after place was attacked throughout the whole year; so that the plague, after it had passed through the whole of France and Germany, where, however, it did not make its ravages until the following year, did not break out till August in England; where it advanced so gradually, that a period of three months elapsed before it

reached London.\* The northern kingdoms were attacked by it in 1349. Sweden, indeed, not until November of that year: almost two years after its eruption in Avignon.† Poland received the plague in 1349, probably from Germany,‡ if not from the northern countries; but in Russia, it did not make its appearance until 1351, more than three years after it had broken out in Constantinople. Instead of advancing in a north-westerly direction from Tauris and from the Caspian Sea, it had thus made the great circuit of the Black Sea, by way of Constantinople, Southern and Central Europe, England, the northern kingdoms and Poland, before it reached the Russian territories; a phenomenon which has not again occurred with respect to more recent pestilences originating in Asia.

Whether any difference existed between the indigenous plague, excited by the influence of the atmosphere, and that which was imported by contagion, can no longer be ascertained from facts; for the contemporaries, who in general were not competent to make accurate researches of this kind, have left no data on the subject. A milder and a more malignant form certainly existed, and the former was not always derived from the latter, as is to be supposed from this circumstance—that the spitting of blood, the infallible diagnostic of the latter, on the first breaking out of the plague, is not similarly mentioned in all the reports; and it is therefore probable that the milder form belonged to the native plague,—the more malignant, to that introduced by contagion. Contagion was, however, in itself, only one of many causes which gave rise to the Black Plague.

This disease was a consequence of violent commotions in the earth's organism—if any disease of cosmical

\* Compare *Deguignes*, loc. cit. p. 288.

† According to the general Byzantine designation, "from the country of the hyperborean Scythians." *Cantacuzen*, loc. cit.

‡ *Guid. Gauliac*, loc. cit.

§ *Matt. Villani*, *Istorie*, in *Muratori*, T. XIV. p. 14.

|| *Annal. Cæsenat*, *Ibid.* p. 1179.

\* *Barnes*, loc. cit.

† *Olof Dalin's Svea-Rikes Historie*, III. vol. Stockholm, 1747–61, 4. Vol. II. C. 12, p. 496.

‡ *Dlugoss*, *Histor. Polon.* L. IX. p. 1086, T. I. Lips. 1711, fol.



origin can be so considered. One spring set a thousand others in motion for the annihilation of living beings, transient or permanent, of mediate or immediate effect. The most powerful of all was contagion; for in the most distant countries, which had scarcely yet heard the echo of the first concussion, the people fell a sacrifice to organic poison,—the untimely offspring of vital energies thrown into violent commotion.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### MORTALITY.

WE have no certain measure by which to estimate the ravages of the Black Plague, if numerical statements were wanted, as in modern times. Let us go back for a moment to the 14th century. The people were yet but little civilized. The church had indeed subdued them; but they all suffered from the ill consequences of their original rudeness. The dominion of the law was not yet confirmed. Sovereigns had everywhere to combat powerful enemies to internal tranquillity and security. The cities were fortresses for their own defense. Marauders encamped on the roads; the husbandman was a feudal slave, without possessions of his own; rudeness was general; humanity, as yet unknown to the people. Witches and heretics were burned alive; gentle rulers were condemned as weak; wild passions, severity, and cruelty, everywhere predominated. Human life was little regarded; governments concerned not themselves about the numbers of their subjects, for whose welfare it was incumbent on them to provide. Thus, the first requisite for estimating the loss of human life, namely, a knowledge of the amount of the population, is altogether wanting; and, moreover, the traditional statements of the amount of this loss are so vague, that at most they only give us ground of probable conjecture.

Cairo lost daily, when the plague was raging with its greatest violence, from 10,000 to 15,000; being as many as, in modern times, great plagues have carried off during their whole course. In China, more than thirteen millions are said to have died; and this is in correspondence with the certainly exaggerated accounts from the rest of Asia. India was depopulated. Tartary, the Tartar kingdom of Kaptshak, Mesopotamia, Syria, Armenia, were covered with dead bodies; the Kurds fled in vain to the mountains. In Caramania and Cæsarea, none were left alive. On the roads, in the camps, in the caravansaries, unburied bodies alone were seen; and a few cities only (Arabian historians name Maara el nooman, Schisur, and Harem) remained, in an unaccountable manner, free. In Aleppo, 500 died daily; 22,000 people, and most of the animals, were carried off in Gaza within six weeks. Cyprus lost almost all its inhabitants;\* and ships without crews were often seen in the Mediterranean, as afterward in the North Sea, driving about, and spreading the plague wherever they went on shore.† It was reported to Pope Clement, at Avignon, that throughout the East, probably with the exception of China, 23,840,000 people had fallen victims to the plague.‡ Considering the occurrences of the 14th and 15th centuries, we might, on first view, suspect the accuracy of this statement. How (it might be asked) could such great wars have been carried on—such powerful efforts have been made; how could the Greek empire, only a hundred years later, have been overthrown, if the people really had been so utterly destroyed?

This account is nevertheless rendered credible by the ascertained fact, that the palaces of princes are less accessible to contagious diseases than the dwellings of the multitude; and that in places of importance, the influx from those districts which have

\* *Dequignes*, loc. cit. p. 223, f.

† *Matt. Villani*, *Istorie*, loc. cit. p. 13.

‡ *Knighton*, in *Barnes*, loc. cit. p. 434.

suffered least soon repairs even the heaviest losses. We must remember, also, that we do not gather much from mere numbers without an intimate knowledge of the state of society. We will, therefore, confine ourselves to exhibiting some of the more credible accounts relative to European cities.

In Florence there died of the Black

Plague .....	60,000 *
In Venice .....	100,000 †
In Marseilles, in one month .....	16,000 ‡
In Siena .....	70,000 §
In Paris .....	50,000
In St. Denys .....	14,000 ¶
In Avignon .....	60,000 **
In Strasburg .....	16,000 ††
In Lübeck .....	9,000 ††
In Basle .....	14,000
In Erfurt, at least .....	16,000

\* *Jno. Trithem. Annal. Hirsaugiens.* (Monast. St. Gall. Hirsaug. 1690. fol.) T. II. p. 296. According to *Boccaccio*, loc. cit. 100,000; according to *Matt. Villani*, loc. cit. p. 14, three out of five.

† *Odoric. Raynald. Annal. ecclesiastic.* Colon. Agripp. 1691. fol. Vol. XVI. p. 280.

‡ *Vitoduran. Chronic.* in *Füssli*, loc. cit.

§ *Tromby, Storia de S. Brunone e dell' ordine Cartusiano.* Vol. VI. L. VIII. p. 235. Napoli. 1777. fol.

|| *Barnes*, p. 435.

¶ *Ibid.*

\*\* *Balus. Vitæ Papar. Avenionens.* Paris, 1693-4. Vol. I. p. 316. According to *Rebdorf* in *Freher*, loc. cit. at the worst period, 500 daily.

†† *Königshoven*, loc. cit.

‡‡ According to *Reimar Kork*, from Easter to Michaelmas 1350, 80,000 to 90,000; among whom were eleven members of the senate, and Bishop John IV. Vid. *John Rud. Becker, Circumstantial History of the Imper. and free city of Lübeck.* Lübeck, 1782, 84, 1805. 3 Vols. 4. Vol. I. p. 269. 71. Although Lübeck was then in its most flourishing state, yet this account, which agrees with that of *Paul Lange*, is certainly exaggerated. (*Chronic. Citizense*, in *I. Pistorius. Rerum Germanic. Scriptores aliquot insignes*, cur. *Struve*. Ratisb. 1626. fol. p. 1214.) We have, therefore, chosen the lower estimate of an anonym. writer. *Chronic. Sclavic.* by *Expold Lindenbrog.* *Scriptores rerum Germanic. Septentrional. vicinorumque populor. diversi*, Francof. 1630. fol. p. 225, and *Spangenberg.* loc. cit., with whom again the assurance of the two authors, that on the 10th August, 1350, 15 or 1700 (according to *Becker* 2500) persons had died, does not coincide. Compare *Chronik des Franciskaner Lesemeisters Detmar*, nach der Urschrift und mit Ergänzungen aus anderen Chroniken, published by *F. H. Grau-*

In Weimar .....	5,000 *
In Limburg .....	2,500 †
In London, at least .....	100,000 ‡
In Norwich .....	51,100 §

To which may be added—

Franciscan Friars in Germany .....	124,434
Minorites in Italy .....	30,000 ¶

This short catalogue might, by a laborious and uncertain calculation, deduced from other sources, be easily further multiplied, but would still fail to give a true picture of the depopulation which took place. Lübeck, at that time the Venice of the North, which could no longer contain the multitudes that flocked to it, was thrown into such consternation on the eruption of the plague, that the citizens destroyed themselves as if in frenzy. Merchants whose earnings and possessions were unbounded, coldly and willingly renounced their earthly goods. They carried their treasures to monasteries and churches, and laid them at the foot of the altar; but gold had no charms for the monks, for it brought them death. They shut their gates; yet, still it was cast to them over the convent walls. People would brook no impediment to the last pious work to which they were driven by despair. When the plague ceased, men thought they were still wandering among the dead, so appalling was the livid aspect of the survivors, in consequence of the anxiety they had undergone, and the unavoidable infection of the air.\*\* Many other cities probably presented a similar appearance; and it is ascertained that a great number of small country towns and villages, which have been estimated, and not too highly, at

toff. Hamburg, 1829, 30. 8. P. I. p. 269. App. 471.

\* *Förstemann, Versuch einer Geschichte der christlichen Geisslergesellschaften*, in *Städlin's und Tschirner's Archiv für alte und neue Kirchengeschichte*, Vol. III. 1817.

† Limburg *Chronicle*, pub. by *C. D. Vogel*. Marburg, 1828. 8vo. p. 14.

‡ *Barnes*, loc. cit.

§ *Ibid.*

|| *Spangenberg.* fol. 339. a.

¶ *Vitoduran*, loc. cit.

\*\* *Becker*, loc. cit.



200,000,\* were bereft of all their inhabitants.

In many places in France not more than two out of twenty of the inhabitants were left alive,† and the capital felt the fury of the plague, alike in the palace and the cot. Two queens,‡ one bishop,§ and great numbers of other distinguished persons, fell a sacrifice to it, and more than 500 a day died in the Hôtel-Dieu, under the faithful care of the religious women, whose disinterested courage, in this age of horror, displayed the most beautiful traits of human virtue. For although they lost their lives, evidently from contagion, and their numbers were several times renewed, there was still no want of fresh candidates, who, strangers to the unchristian fear of death, piously devoted themselves to their holy calling.

✓ The churchyards were soon unable to contain the dead,|| and many houses, left without inhabitants, fell to ruins. In Avignon, the pope found it necessary to consecrate the Rhone, that bodies might be thrown into the river without delay, as the churchyards would no longer hold them; ¶ so likewise, in all populous cities, extraordinary measures were adopted, in order speedily to dispose of the dead. In Vienna, where for some time 1200 inhabitants died daily,\*\* the interment of corpses in the churchyards and within the churches was forthwith prohibited; and the dead were then arranged in layers, by thousands, in six large pits outside the city,†† as had already been done in

Cairo and Paris. Yet, still many were secretly buried; for at all times the people are attached to the consecrated cemeteries of their dead, and will not renounce the customary mode of interment.

In many places, it was rumored that plague patients were buried alive,\* as may sometimes happen through senseless alarm and indecent haste; and thus the horror of the distressed people was everywhere increased. In Erfurt, after the churchyards were filled, 12,000 corpses were thrown into eleven great pits; and the like might, more or less exactly, be stated with respect to all the larger cities.† Funeral ceremonies, the last consolation of the survivors, were everywhere impracticable.

In all Germany, according to a probable calculation, there seem to have died only 1,244,434 ‡ inhabitants; this country, however, was more spared than others; Italy, on the contrary, was most severely visited. It is said to have lost half its inhabitants; § and this account is rendered credible from the immense losses of individual cities and provinces: for in Sardinia and Corsica, according to the account of the distinguished Florentine, John Villani, who was himself carried off by the Black Plague,|| scarcely a third part of the population remained alive; and it is related of the Venetians, that they engaged ships at a high rate to retreat to the islands; so that after the plague had carried off three fourths of her inhabitants, that proud city was left

\* *Rebdorf*. p. 630.

† *Guillelm. de Nangis*. loc. cit.

‡ *Johanna*, queen of Navarre, daughter of *Louis X.*, and *Johanna* of Burgundy, wife of King *Philip de Valois*.

§ *Fulco de Chanac*.

|| *Mich. Felibien*, *Histoire de la ville de Paris*, Liv. XII. Vol. II. p. 601, Paris, 1725. fol. Cf. *Guillelm. de Nangis*. loc. cit. and *Daniel Histoire de France*, Tom. II. p. 484. Amsterd. 1720, 4to.

¶ *Torfeus*, loc. cit.

\*\* According to another account, 960. *Chronic. Salisburg.* in *Pes.* loc. cit. T. I. p. 412.

†† According to an anonymous Chronicler, each of these pits is said to have contained

40,000; this, however, we are to understand as only in round numbers. Anonym. *Leobien.* in *Pes.* p. 970. According to this writer, above seventy persons died in some houses, and many were entirely deserted, and at St. Stephen's alone, fifty-four ecclesiastics were cut off.

\* *Auger. de Biterris* in *Muratori*, Vol. III. P. II. p. 556. The same is said of Paderborn, by *Gobelin Person*, in *Henr. Meibom. Rer. Germanic. Script. T. I.* p. 286. Helmstadt, 1688. fol.

† *Spangenberg*. loc. cit. chap. 287. fol. 337. b.

‡ *Barnes*, 435.

§ *Trithem. Annal. Hirsau.* loc. cit.

|| Loc. cit. L. XII. c. 99. p. 977.



forlorn and desolate.\* In Padua, after the cessation of the plague, two thirds of the inhabitants were wanting; and in Florence it was prohibited to publish the numbers of the dead, and to toll the bells at their funerals, in order that the living might not abandon themselves to despair.†

We have more exact accounts of England; most of the great cities suffered incredible losses; above all, Yarmouth, in which, 7052 died: Bristol, Oxford, Norwich, Leicester, York, and London, where, in one burial-ground alone, there were interred upward of 50,000 corpses, arranged in layers, in large pits.‡ It is said that in the whole country, scarcely a tenth part remained alive;§ but this estimate is evidently too high. Smaller losses were sufficient to cause those convulsions, whose consequences were felt for some centuries, in a false impulse given to civil life, and whose indirect influence, unknown to the English, has perhaps, extended even to modern times.

Morals were deteriorated everywhere, and public worship was, in a great measure, laid aside; for, in many places, the churches were deserted, being bereft of their priests. The instruction of the people was impeded;|| covetousness became general; and when tranquillity was restored, the great increase of lawyers was astonishing, to whom the endless disputes regarding inheritances offered a rich harvest. The want of priests too, throughout the country, operated very detrimentally upon the people,

(the lower classes being most exposed to the ravages of the plague, while the houses of the nobility were, in proportion, much more spared,) and it was no compensation that bands of ignorant laymen, who had lost their wives during the pestilence, crowded into the monastic orders, that they might share in the respectability of the priesthood, and in the rich heritages which fell to the church from all quarters. The sittings of Parliament, of the King's Bench, and of most of the other courts, were suspended as long as the malady raged. The laws of peace availed not during the dominion of death. Pope Clement took advantage of this state of disorder to adjust the bloody quarrel between Edward III. and Philip VI.; yet he only succeeded during the period that the plague commanded peace. Philip's death (1350) annulled all treaties; and it is related that Edward, with other troops indeed, but with the same leaders and knights, again took the field. Ireland was much less heavily visited than England. The disease seems to have scarcely reached the mountainous districts of that kingdom; and Scotland too would, perhaps, have remained free, had not the Scots availed themselves of the misfortune of the English, to make an irruption into their territory, which terminated in the destruction of their army, by the plague and by the sword, and the extension of the pestilence, through those who escaped, over the whole country.

At the commencement, there was in England a superabundance of all the necessities of life; but the plague, which seemed then to be the sole disease, was soon accompanied by a fatal murrain among the cattle. Wandering about without herdsmen, they fell by thousands; and, as has likewise been observed in Africa, the birds and beasts of prey are said not to have touched them. Of what nature this murrain may have been, can no more be determined, than whether it originated from communication with the plague patients, or from other

\* Chronic. Claustro-Neoburg. in *Pez.* Vol. II. p. 490. Comp. *Barnes*, p. 435. *Raynald* Histor. ecclesiastic, loc. cit. According to this account, a fugitive Venetian is said to have brought the plague to Padua.

† *Giov. Villani*, L. XII. c. 83. p. 964.

‡ *Barnes*, p. 436.

§ *Wood*, loc. cit.

|| *Wood* says that before the plague, there were 13,000 students at Oxford; a number which may, in some degree, enable us to form an estimate of the state of education in England at that time, if we consider that the universities were, in the middle ages, frequented by younger students, who in modern times do not quit school till their 18th year.



causes; but thus much is certain, that it did not break out until after the commencement of the Black Death. In consequence of this murrain, and the impossibility of removing the corn from the fields, there was everywhere a great rise in the price of food, which to many was inexplicable, because the harvest had been plentiful; by some it was attributed to the wicked designs of the farmers and dealers; but it really had its foundation in the actual deficiency arising from circumstances by which individual classes at all times endeavor to profit. For a whole year, until it terminated in August, 1349, the Black Plague prevailed in this beautiful island, and everywhere poisoned the springs of comfort and prosperity.\*

In other countries, it generally lasted only half a year, but returned frequently in individual places; on which account, some, without sufficient proof, assigned to it a period of seven years.† Spain was uninterruptedly ravaged by the Black Plague till after the year 1350, to which the frequent internal feuds and the wars with the Moors not a little contributed. Alphonso XI., whose passion for war carried him too far, died of it at the siege of Gibraltar, on the 26th of March, 1350. He was the only king in Europe who fell a sacrifice to it; but even before this period, innumerable families had been thrown into affliction.‡ The mortality seems otherwise to have been less in Spain than in Italy, and about as considerable as in France.

The whole period during which the Black Plague raged with destructive violence in Europe, was, with the exception of Russia, from the year 1347 to 1350. The plagues which in the

sequel often returned until the year 1383,\* we do not consider as belonging to "the Great Mortality." They were rather common pestilences, without inflammation of the lungs, such as in former times, and in the following centuries, were excited by the matter of contagion everywhere existing, and which, on every favorable occasion, gained ground anew, as is usually the case with this frightful disease.

The concourse of large bodies of people was especially dangerous; and thus, the premature celebration of the Jubilee, to which Clement VI. cited the faithful to Rome, (1350,) during the great epidemic, caused a new eruption of the plague, from which it is said that scarcely one in a hundred of the pilgrims escaped.† Italy was, in consequence, depopulated anew; and those who returned spread poison and corruption of morals in all directions.‡ It is, therefore, the less apparent, how that pope, who was in general wise and considerate, and who knew how to pursue the path of reason and humanity, under the most difficult circumstances, should have been led to adopt a measure so injurious; since he himself was so convinced of the salutary effect of seclusion, that during the plague in Avignon he kept up constant fires, and suffered no one to approach him;§ and, in other respects, gave such orders as averted, or alleviated, much misery.

The changes which occurred about this period in the north of Europe are sufficiently memorable to claim a few moments' attention. In Sweden two princes died—Haken and Knut, half-brothers of King Magnus; and in Westgothland alone, 466 priests.|| The inhabitants of Iceland and

\* Barnes and Wood, loc. cit.

† Gobelín. *Person.* in Meibom. loc. cit.

‡ Juan de Mariana, *Historia General de España*, illustrated by Don José Sabau y Blanco, Tom. IX. Madrid, 1819. 8vo. Libro XVI. p. 225. Don Diego Ortíz de Zúñiga, *Annales ecclesiásticos y seculares de Sevilla*. Madrid, 1795. 4to. T. II. p. 121. Don Juan de Ferreras, *Historia de España*. Madrid, 1721. T. VII. p. 353.

\* Gobelín. *Person.* loc. cit. Comp. Chalin, p. 53.

† Guillelm. de Nangis, loc. cit.

‡ Spangenberg, fol. 337. b. Limburg. *Chronic.* p. 20.

§ Guillelm. de Nangis, loc. cit. and many others.

|| Dalin's *Svea Rikes Historie*, Vol. II. c. 12. p. 496.



Greenland found in the coldness of their inhospitable climate no protection against the southern enemy who had penetrated to them from happier countries. The plague wrought great havoc among them. Nature made no allowance for their constant warfare with the elements, and the parsimony with which she had meted out to them the enjoyments of life.\* In Denmark and Norway, however, people were so occupied with their own misery, that the accustomed voyages to Greenland ceased. Towering icebergs formed at the same time on the coast of East Greenland, in consequence of the general disturbance of the earth's organism; and no mortal, from that time forward, has ever seen that shore or its inhabitants.†

It has been observed that in Russia the Black Plague did not break out until 1351, after it had already passed through the south and north of Europe. In this country also, the mortality was extraordinarily great; and the same scenes of affliction and despair were exhibited, as had occurred in those nations which had already passed the ordeal—the same mode of burial, the same horrible certainty of death, the same torpor and depression of spirits. The wealthy abandoned their treasures, and gave their villages and estates to the churches and monasteries; this being, according to the notions of the age, the surest way of securing the favor of Heaven and the forgiveness of past sins. In Russia, too, the voice of nature was silenced by fear and horror. In the hour of danger, fathers and mothers deserted their children, and children their parents.‡

Of all the estimates of the number

of lives lost in Europe, the most probable is, that altogether a fourth part of the inhabitants were carried off. And if in the fourteenth century the population was 100,000,000, then it may be assumed, without exaggeration, that Europe lost during the Black Death 25,000,000 inhabitants.

That her nations could so quickly recover from so fearful a visitation, and, without retrograding more than they actually did, could so develop their energies in the following century, is a most convincing proof of the indestructibility of human society as a whole. To assume, however, that it did not suffer any essential change internally, because in appearance everything remained as before, is inconsistent with a just view of cause and effect. Many historians seem to have adopted such an opinion; accustomed, as usual, to judge of the moral condition of the people solely according to the vicissitudes of earthly power, the events of battles, and the influence of religion, but to pass over with indifference the great phenomena of nature, which modify, not only the surface of the earth, but also the human mind. Hence, most of them have touched but superficially on the "Great Mortality" of the 14th century. We for our part are convinced, that in the history of the world, the Black Death is one of the most important events which have prepared the way for the present state of Europe.

He who studies the human mind with attention, and forms a deliberate judgment on the intellectual powers which set people and states in motion, may, perhaps, find some proofs of this assertion in the following observations:—at that time, the advancement of the hierarchy was, in most countries, extraordinary; for the church acquired treasures and large properties in land, even to a greater extent than after the crusades; but experience has demonstrated, that such a state of things is ruinous to the people, and causes them to retrograde, as was evinced on this occasion.

\* *Saabye*. Tagebuch in Grönland. Eineleit. XVIII. *Torfaei* Histor. Norveg. Tom. IV. L. IX. c. viii. p. 478-79. *F. G. Mansa*, De epidemiis maxime memorabilibus quæ in Dania Grassatæ sunt, et de Medicinæ statu. Partic. I. Havn. 1831. 8vo. p. 12.

† *Torfaei* Groenlandia antiqua, s. veteris Groenlandiæ descriptio. Havniæ. 1715. 8vo. p. 23. *Pontan*. Rer. danicar. Histor. Amstelod. 1631. fol. L. VII. p. 476.

‡ *Richter*, loc. cit.

After the cessation of the Black Plague, a greater fecundity in women was everywhere remarkable—a grand phenomenon, which, from its occurrence after every destructive pestilence, proves to conviction, if any occurrence can do so, the prevalence of a higher power in the direction of general organic life. Marriages were, almost without exception, prolific; and double and treble births were more frequent than at other times; under which head, we should remember the strange remark, that after the "Great Mortality" the children were said to have got fewer teeth than before; at which contemporaries were mightily shocked, and even later writers have felt surprise.

If we examine the grounds of this oft-repeated assertion, we shall find that they were astonished to see children cut twenty, or at most, twenty-two teeth, under the supposition that a greater number had formerly fallen to their share.\* Some writers of authority, as, for example, the physician Savonarola,† of Ferrara, who probably looked for twenty-eight teeth in children, published their opinions on this subject. Others copied from them, without seeing for themselves, as often happens in other matters which are equally evident; and thus the world believed in the miracle of an imperfection in the human body which had been caused by the Black Plague.

The people gradually consoled themselves after the sufferings which they had undergone; the dead were lamented and forgotten; and in the stirring vicissitudes of existence, the world belonged to the living.‡

\* We shall take this view of the subject from *Guillelm. de Nangis* and *Barnes*, if we read them *with attention*. Compare *Olof Dalin*, loc. cit.

† *Practica de ægritudinibus a capite usque ad pedes*. Papiæ, 1486. fol. Tract VI. c. vii.

‡ *Limburger Chronik*, p. 26. "After this, when, as was stated before, the Mortality, the Processions of the Flagellants, the Pilgrimages to Rome, and the Massacre of the Jews, were at an end, the world began to revive and be joyful, and the people put on new clothes."

## CHAPTER V.

## MORAL EFFECTS.

THE mental shock sustained by all nations during the prevalence of the Black Plague is without parallel and beyond description. In the eyes of the timorous, danger was the certain harbinger of death; many fell victims to fear, on the first appearance of the distemper,\* and the most stout-hearted lost their confidence. Thus, after reliance on the future had died away, the spiritual union which binds man to his family and his fellow-creatures was gradually dissolved. The pious closed their accounts with the world; eternity presented itself to their view; their only remaining desire was for a participation in the consolations of religion, because to them death was disarmed of its sting.

Repentance seized the transgressor, admonishing him to consecrate his remaining hours to the exercise of Christian virtues. All minds were directed to the contemplation of futurity; and children, who manifest the more elevated feelings of the soul without alloy, were frequently seen, while laboring under the plague, breathing out their spirit with prayer and songs of thanksgiving.†

An awful sense of contrition seized Christians everywhere; they resolved to forsake their vices, to make restitution for past offenses, before they were summoned hence, to seek recon-

\* *Cholin*, loc. cit. p. 98. *Detmar's Lübeck Chronicle*, V. I. p. 401.

† *Chronik. Diltmar's Episcop. Merseburg.*, Francof. 1580, fol. p. 358. *Sfangenberg*, p. 338. "The lamentation was piteous; and the only remaining solace, was the prevalent anxiety, inspired by the danger, to prepare for a glorious departure; no other hope remained—death appeared inevitable. Many were hence induced to search into their own hearts, to turn to God, and to abandon their wicked courses: parents warned their children, and instructed them how to pray, and to submit to the ways of Providence: neighbors mutually admonished each other; none could reckon on a single hour's respite. Many persons, and even young children, were seen bidding farewell to the world; some with prayer, others with praises on their lips."



ciliation with their Maker, and to avert, by self-chastisement, the punishment due to their former sins. Human nature would be exalted, could the countless noble actions, which, in times of most imminent danger, were performed in secret, be recorded for the instruction of future generations. They, however, have no influence on the course of worldly events. They are known only to silent eye-witnesses, and soon fall into oblivion. But hypocrisy, illusion, and bigotry, stalk abroad undaunted; they desecrate what is noble, they pervert what is divine, to the unholy purposes of selfishness; which hurries along every good feeling in the false excitement of the age. Thus it was in the years of this plague. In the 14th century, the monastic system was still in its full vigor, the power of the religious orders and brotherhoods was revered by the people, and the hierarchy was still formidable to the temporal power. It was, therefore, in the natural constitution of society that bigoted zeal, which in such times makes a show of public acts of penance, should avail itself of the semblance of religion. But this took place in such a manner, that unbridled, self-willed penitence, degenerated into lukewarmness, renounced obedience to the hierarchy, and prepared a fearful opposition to the church, paralyzed as it was by antiquated forms.

While all countries were filled with lamentations and woe, there first arose in Hungary,\* and afterward in Germany, the Brotherhood of the Flagellants, called also the Brethren of the Cross, or Cross-bearers, who took upon themselves the repentance of the people, for the sins they had committed, and offered prayers and supplications for the averting of this plague. This Order consisted chiefly of persons of the lower class, who were either actuated by sincere contrition, or who joyfully availed them-

selves of this pretext for idleness, and were hurried along with the tide of distracting frenzy. But as these brotherhoods gained in repute, and were welcomed by the people with veneration and enthusiasm, many nobles and ecclesiastics ranged themselves under their standard; and their bands were not unfrequently augmented by children, honorable women, and nuns; so powerfully were minds of the most opposite temperaments enslaved by this infatuation.\* They marched through the cities, in well-organized processions, with leaders and singers; their heads covered as far as the eyes; their look fixed on the ground, accompanied by every token of the deepest contrition and mourning. They were robed in somber garments, with red crosses on the breast, back, and cap, and bore triple scourges, tied in three or four knots, in which points of iron were fixed.† Tapers and magnificent banners of velvet and cloth of gold, were carried before them; wherever they made their appearance, they were welcomed by the ringing of bells; and the people flocked from all quarters, to listen to their hymns and to witness their penance, with devotion and tears.

In the year 1349, two hundred Flagellants first entered Strasburg, where they were received with great joy, and hospitably lodged by the citizens. Above a thousand joined the brotherhood, which now assumed the appearance of a wandering tribe, and separated into two bodies, for the purpose of journeying to the north and to the south. For more than half a year, new parties arrived

\* *Torfsi Hist. rer. Norvegic. L. IX. c. viii. p. 478.* (Havn. 1711, fol.) *Die Cronica van der hilliger Stat van Collen, off dat tyz-boich* Coellen, 1499, fol. p. 263.

\* *Albert. Argentinens. Chronic. p. 149, in Chr. Urstisius, Germaniæ historicorum illustrum Tomus unus, Francof. 1585, fol. Guilelm. de Nang. loc. cit.* Comp. also the *Saxon Chronicle*, by *Mattheus Dresseren*, Physician and Professor at Leipsig. Wittenberg, 1596, fol. p. 340; the above-named *Limburg Chronicle*, and the *Germaniæ Chronicon*, on the origin, name, commerce, etc., of all the Teutonic nations of Germany: by *Seb. Francken*, of Wörd. Tübingen, 1534, fol. p. 201.

† *Ditmar*, loc. cit.



weekly; and, on each arrival, adults and children left their families to accompany them; till, at length, their sanctity was questioned and the doors of houses and churches were closed against them.\* At Spire, two hundred boys, of twelve years of age and under, constituted themselves into a Brotherhood of the Cross, in imitation of the children who, about a hundred years before, had united, at the instigation of some fanatic monks, for the purpose of recovering the Holy Sepulchre. All the inhabitants of this town were carried away by the delusion; they conducted the strangers to their houses with songs of thanksgiving, to regale them for the night. The women embroidered banners for them, and all were anxious to augment their pomp: and at every succeeding pilgrimage, their influence and reputation increased.†

It was not merely some individual parts of the country that fostered them; all Germany, Hungary, Poland, Bohemia, Silesia, and Flanders, did homage to the mania; and they at length became as formidable to the secular, as they were to the ecclesiastical power. The influence of this fanaticism was great and threatening; resembling the excitement which called all the inhabitants of Europe into the deserts of Syria and Palestine, about two hundred and fifty years before. The appearance, in itself, was not novel. As far back as the 11th century, many believers, in Asia and Southern Europe, afflicted themselves with the punishment of flagellation. Dominic Loricatus, a monk of Sta. Croce d'Avellano, is mentioned as the master and model of this species of mortification of the flesh; which, according to the primitive notions of the Asiatic Anchorites, was deemed eminently Christian. The author of the solemn processions of the Flagellants, is said to have been St. Anthony; for even in his time (1231) this

kind of penance was so much in vogue, that it is recorded as an eventful circumstance in the history of the world. In 1260, the Flagellants appeared in Italy as *Devoti*. "When the land was polluted by vices and crimes,\* an unexampled spirit of remorse suddenly seized the minds of the Italians. The fear of Christ fell upon all: noble and lowly, old and young, and even children of five years of age, marched through the streets with no covering but a scarf round the waist. They each carried a scourge of leathern thongs, which they applied to their limbs, amid sighs and tears, with such violence, that the blood flowed from the wounds. Not only during the day, but even by night, and in the severest winter, they traversed the cities with burning torches and banners, in thousands and tens of thousands, headed by their priests, and prostrated themselves before the altars. They proceeded in the same manner in the villages: and the woods and mountains resounded with the voices of those whose cries were raised to God. The melancholy chant of the penitent alone was heard. Enemies were reconciled, men and women vied with each other in splendid works of charity, as if they dreaded that Divine Omnipotence would pronounce on them the doom of annihilation."

The pilgrimages of the Flagellants extended throughout all the provinces of Southern Germany, as far as Saxony, Bohemia, and Poland, and even further; but at length, the priests resisted this dangerous fanaticism, without being able to extirpate the illusion, which was advantageous to the hierarchy, as long as it submitted to its sway. Regnier, a hermit of Perugia, is recorded as a fanatic preacher of penitence, with whom the extravagance originated.† In the year 1296, there was a great procession of the

\* *Königshoven*, *Elsassische und Strassburgische Chronike*. loc. cit. p. 297. f.

† *Albert. Argentin.* loc. cit. They never remained longer than one night at any place.

\* Words of *Monachus Paduanus*, quoted in *Förstemann's* Treatise, which is the best upon this subject.

† *Schnurrer*, *Chronicle of the Plagues*, T. I. p. 291.



Flagellants in Strasburg;\* and in 1334, fourteen years before the Great Mortality, the sermon of Venturinus, a Dominican friar, of Bergamo, induced above 10,000 persons to undertake a new pilgrimage. They scourged themselves in the churches, and were entertained in the market-places, at the public expense. At Rome, Venturinus was derided, and banished by the Pope to the mountains of Ricondona. He patiently endured all—went to the Holy Land, and died at Smyrna, 1346.† Hence we see that this fanaticism was a mania of the middle ages, which, in the year 1349, on so fearful an occasion, and while still so fresh in remembrance, needed no new founder; of whom, indeed, all the records are silent. It probably arose in many places at the same time; for the terror of death, which pervaded all nations and suddenly set such powerful impulses in motion, might easily conjure up the fanaticism of exaggerated and overpowering repentance.

The practices of the Flagellants of the 13th and 14th centuries exactly resemble each other. But if, during the Black Plague, simple credulity came to their aid, which seized, as a consolation, the grossest delusion of religious enthusiasm, yet it is evident that the leaders must have been intimately united, and have exercised the power of a secret association. Besides, the rude band was generally under the control of men of learning, some of whom, at least, certainly had other objects in view, independent

of those which ostensibly appeared. Whoever was desirous of joining the brotherhood, was bound to remain in it thirty-four days, and to have four pence per day at his own disposal, so that he might not be burthensome to any one; if married, he was obliged to have the sanction of his wife, and give the assurance that he was reconciled to all men. The Brothers of the Cross were not permitted to seek for free quarters, or even to enter a house without having been invited; they were forbidden to converse with females; and if they transgressed these rules, or acted without discretion, they were obliged to confess to the Superior, who sentenced them to several lashes of the scourge, by way of penance. Ecclesiastics had not, as such, any pre-eminence among them; according to their original law, which, however, was often transgressed, they could not become Masters, or take part in the *Secret Councils*. Penance was performed twice every day; in the morning and evening they went abroad in pairs, singing psalms, amid the ringing of the bells; and when they arrived at the place of flagellation, they stripped the upper part of their bodies and put off their shoes, keeping on only a linen dress, reaching from the waist to the ankles. They then lay down in a large circle, in different positions, according to the nature of their crime: the adulterer with his face to the ground; the perjurer on one side, holding up three fingers, etc.; and were then castigated, some more and some less, by the Master, who ordered them to rise in the words of a prescribed form.\* Upon this, they scourged themselves, amid the singing of psalms and loud supplications for the averting of the plague, with genuflexions, and other ceremonies, of which contemporary writers give various accounts; and at the same time constantly boasted of their penance, that the blood of their wounds was mingled with that of the

\* Königshoven, loc. cit.

† Förstemann, loc. cit. The Pilgrimages of the Flagellants of the year 1349, were not the last. Later in the 14th century this fanaticism still manifested itself several times, though never to so great an extent: in the 15th century, it was deemed necessary, in several parts of Germany, to extirpate them by fire and sword; and in the year 1710, processions of the Cross-bearers were still seen in Italy. How deeply this mania had taken root, is proved by the deposition of a citizen of Nordhausen (1446): that his wife, in the belief of performing a Christian act, wanted to scourge her children, as soon as they were baptized.

\* Königshoven, p. 298.

"*Stant uf durch der reinen Martel ere;  
Und hütte dich vor der Sünden mere.*"



Saviour.\* One of them, in conclusion, stood up to read a letter, which it was pretended an angel had brought from heaven, to St. Peter's church, at Jerusalem, stating that Christ, who was sore displeased at the sins of man, had granted, at the intercession of the Holy Virgin and of the angels, that all who should wonder about for thirty-four days and scourge themselves, should be partakers of the Divine grace.† This scene caused as great a commotion among the believers as the finding of the holy spear once did at Antioch; and if any among the clergy inquired who had sealed the letter, he was boldly answered, the same who had sealed the Gospel!

All this had so powerful an effect, that the church was in considerable danger; for the Flagellants gained more credit than the priests, from whom they so entirely withdrew themselves, that they even absolved each other. Besides, they everywhere took possession of the churches, and their new songs, which went from mouth to mouth, operated strongly on the minds of the people. Great enthusiasm and originally pious feelings, are clearly distinguishable in these hymns, and especially in the chief psalm of the Cross-bearers, which is still extant, and which was sung all over Germany, in different dialects, and is probably of a more ancient date.‡ Degeneracy, however, soon crept in;

crimes were everywhere committed; and there was no energetic man capable of directing the individual excitement to purer objects, even had an effectual resistance to the tottering church been at that early period seasonable, and had it been possible to restrain the fanaticism. The Flagellants sometimes undertook to make trial of their power of working miracles; as in Strasburg, where they attempted, in their own circle, to resuscitate a dead child: they however failed, and their unskillfulness did them much harm, though they succeeded here and there in maintaining some confidence in their holy calling, by pretending to have the power of casting out evil spirits.\*

The Brotherhood of the Cross announced that the pilgrimage of the Flagellants was to continue for a space of thirty-four years; and many of the Masters had, doubtless, determined to form a lasting league against the church; but they had gone too far. So early as the first year of their establishment, the general indignation set bounds to their intrigues; so that the strict measures adopted by the Emperor Charles IV., and Pope Clement,† who, throughout the whole of this fearful period, manifested prudence and noble-mindedness, and conducted himself in a manner every way worthy of his high station, were easily put into execution.‡

The Sorbonne, at Paris, and the Emperor Charles, had already applied to the Holy See, for assistance against these formidable and heretical excesses, which had well nigh destroyed the influence of the clergy in every place, when a hundred of the Brotherhood of the Cross arrived at Avignon from

\* *Guill. de Nang.* loc. cit.

† *Albert. Argentinens.* loc. cit.

‡ We meet with fragments of different lengths in the Chronicles of the times, but the only entire MS. which we possess, is in the valuable Library of President *von Meusebach*. *Massman* has had this printed, accompanied by a translation, entitled *Erläuterungen zum Wessobrunner Gebet des 8ten Jahrhunderts. Nebst ZWEIEN noch ungedruckten, GEDICHTEN DES VIERZEHNTEN JAHRHUNDERTS*, Berlin, 1824. We shall subjoin it at the end of this Treatise, as a striking document of the age. The Limburg Chronicle asserts, indeed, that it was not composed till that time, although a part, if not the whole, of it, was sung in the procession of the Flagellants, in 1260—See *Incerti auctoris Chronicon rerum per Austriam vicinasque regiones gestarum inde ab anno 1025, usque ad annum 1282*. Munich, 1827-28, p. 9.

\* *Trithem. Annal. Hirsaugiens.* T. II. p. 206.

† He issued a bull against them, Oct. 20, 1349. *Raynald. Trithem.* loc. cit.

‡ "But as they at last ceased to excite astonishment, were no longer welcomed by the ringing of bells, and were not received with veneration, as before, they vanished as human imaginations are wont to do." *Saxon Chronicle*, by *Matt. Dresseren*. Wittenberg, 1596, fol. p. 340, 351.



Basle, and desired admission. The Pope, regardless of the intercession of several cardinals, interdicted their public penance, which he had not authorized; and, on pain of excommunication, prohibited throughout Christendom the continuance of these pilgrimages.\* Philip VI., supported by the condemnatory judgment of the Sorbonne, forbade their reception in France.† Manfred, King of Sicily, at the same time threatened them with punishment by death: and in the East, they were withstood by several bishops, among whom was Janussius, of Gnesen,‡ and Preczlav, of Breslau, who condemned to death one of their Masters, formerly a deacon; and, in conformity with the barbarity of the times, had him publicly burnt. In Westphalia, where so shortly before they had venerated the Brothers of the Cross, they now persecuted them with relentless severity;§ and in the Bradenburg, as well as in all the other countries of Germany, they pursued them, as if they had been the authors of every misfortune.

The processions of the Brotherhood of the Cross undoubtedly promoted the spreading of the plague; and it is evident, that the gloomy fanaticism which gave rise to them would infuse a new poison into the already depending minds of the people.

Still, however, all this was within the bounds of barbarous enthusiasm; but horrible were the persecutions of the Jews, which were committed in most countries, with even greater exasperation than in the 12th century, during the first Crusades. In every destructive pestilence, the common people at first attribute the mortality to poison. No instruction avails, the supposed testimony of their eyesight is to them a proof, and they authoritatively demand the victims in their rage. On whom then was it so likely to fall, as on the Jews, the usurers and the strangers who lived

at enmity with the Christians? They were everywhere suspected of having poisoned the wells or infected the air.\* They alone were considered as having brought this fearful mortality upon the Christians.† They were in consequence, pursued with merciless cruelty; and either indiscriminately given up to the fury of the populace, or sentenced by sanguinary tribunals, which, with all the forms of law, ordered them to be burnt alive. In times like these, much is indeed said of guilt and innocence; but hatred and revenge bear down all discrimination, and the smallest probability magnifies suspicion into certainty. These bloody scenes, which disgraced Europe in the 14th century, are a counterpart to a similar mania of the age, which was manifested in the persecutions of witches and sorcerers; and, like these, they prove that enthusiasm, associated with hatred, and leagued with the baser passions, may work more powerfully upon whole nations, than religion and legal order; nay, that it even knows how to profit by the authority of both. in order the more surely to satiate with blood, the sword of long-suppressed revenge.

The persecution of the Jews commenced in September and October, 1348,‡ at Chillon, on the Lake of Geneva, where the first criminal proceedings were instituted against them, after they had long before been accused by the people of poisoning the wells; similar scenes followed in Bern and Freyburg, in January, 1349. Under the influence of excruciating suffering, the tortured Jews confessed themselves guilty of the crime im-

\* So says the Polish historian *Dlugoss*, loc. cit., while most of his contemporaries mention only the poisoning of the wells. It is evident, that in the state of their feelings, it mattered little whether they added another still more formidable accusation.

† In those places where no Jews resided, as in Leipzig, Magdeburg, Brieg, Frankenstein, etc., the grave-diggers were accused of the crime. See *Möhsen's History of the Sciences in the March of Brandenburg*, T. II. p. 265.

‡ See the original proceedings, in the Appendix.

\* *Albert. Argentinens.* loc. cit.

† *Guillelm. de Nangis.*

‡ *Ditmar.* loc. cit.

§ *Limburg Chronicle*, p. 17.



puted to them; and it being affirmed that poison had in fact been found in a well at Zoffingen, this was deemed a sufficient proof to convince the world; and the persecution of the abhorred culprits thus appeared justifiable. Now, though we can take as little exception at these proceedings, as at the multifarious confessions of witches, because the interrogatories of the fanatical and sanguinary tribunals were so complicated, that by means of the rack, the required answer must inevitably be obtained; and it is besides conformable to human nature, that crimes which are in everybody's mouth, may, in the end, be actually committed by some, either from wantonness, revenge, or desperate exasperation; yet crimes and accusations are, under circumstances like these, merely the offspring of a revengeful, frenzied spirit in the people; and the accusers, according to the fundamental principles of morality, which are the same in every age, are the more guilty transgressors.

Already in the autumn of 1348, a dreadful panic, caused by this supposed empoisonment, seized all nations; in Germany especially, the springs and wells were built over, that nobody might drink of them, or employ their contents for culinary purposes; and for a long time, the inhabitants of numerous towns and villages used only river and rain water.\* The city gates were also guarded with the greatest caution: only confidential persons were admitted; and if medicine, or any other article, which might be supposed to be poisonous, was found in the possession of a stranger,—and it was natural that some should have these things by them for their private use,—he was forced to swallow a portion of it.† By this trying state of priva-

tion, distrust, and suspicion, the hatred against the supposed poisoners became greatly increased, and often broke out in popular commotions, which only served still further to infuriate the wildest passions. The noble and the mean fearlessly bound themselves by an oath to extirpate the Jews by fire and sword, and to snatch them from their protectors, of whom the number was so small, that throughout all Germany but few places can be mentioned where these unfortunate people were not regarded as outlaws and martyred and burnt.\* Solemn summonses were issued from Bern to the towns of Basle, Freyburg in Breisgau, and Strasburg, to pursue the Jews as poisoners. The Burgomasters and Senators, indeed, opposed this requisition; but in Basle the populace obliged them to bind themselves by an oath to burn the Jews, and to forbid persons of that community from entering their city, for the space of two hundred years. Upon this, all the Jews in Basle, whose number could not have been inconsiderable, were inclosed in a wooden building, constructed for the purpose, and burnt, together with it, upon the mere outcry of the people, without sentence or trial, which indeed would have availed them nothing. Soon after, the same thing took place at Freyburg. A regular Diet was held at Bennefeld, in Alsace, where the bishops, lords, and barons, as also deputies of the counties and towns, consulted how they should proceed with regard to the Jews; and when the deputies of Strasburg—not indeed the bishop of this town, who proved himself a violent fanatic—spoke in favor of the persecuted, as nothing criminal was substantiated against them; a great outcry was raised, and it was vehemently asked, why, if so, they had covered their wells and removed their buckets? A sanguinary decree was resolved upon, of which the populace, who obeyed the call of the nobles and su-

\* *Hermannii Gygantis Flores temporum, sive Chronicon Universale Lugdun. Bat. 1743. 4to, p. 139.* Hermann, a Franciscan monk of Franconia, who wrote in the year 1349, was an eye-witness of the most revolting scenes of vengeance, throughout all Germany.

† *Guid. Cauliac, loc. cit.*

\* *Hermann. loc. cit.*



perior clergy, became but the too-willing executioners.\* Wherever the Jews were not burnt, they were at least banished; and so being compelled to wander about, they fell into the hands of the country people, who without humanity, and regardless of all laws, persecuted them with fire and sword. At Spire the Jews, driven to despair, assembled in their own habitations, which they set on fire, and thus consumed themselves with their families. The few that remained were forced to submit to baptism; while the dead bodies of the murdered, which lay about the streets, were put into empty wine casks, and rolled into the Rhine, lest they should infect the air. The mob was forbidden to enter the ruins of the habitations that were burnt in the Jewish quarter; for the senate itself caused search to be made for the treasure, which is said to have been very considerable. At Strasburg, two thousand Jews were burnt alive in their own burial ground, where a large scaffold had been erected: a few who promised to embrace Christianity, were spared, and their children taken from the pile. The youth and beauty of several females also excited some commiseration; and they were snatched from death against their will: many, however, who made their escape from the flames, were murdered in the streets.

The senate ordered all pledges and bonds to be returned to the debtors, and divided the money among the work-people.† Many, however, refused to accept the base price of blood, and, indignant at the scenes of blood-thirsty avarice, which made the infuriated multitude forget ‡ that the

plague was raging around them, presented it to monasteries, in conformity with the advice of their confessors. In all the countries on the Rhine, these cruelties continued to be perpetrated during the succeeding months; and after quiet was in some degree restored, the people thought to render an acceptable service to God, by taking the bricks of the destroyed dwellings, and the tombstones of the Jews, to repair churches and to erect belfries.

In Mayence alone, 12,000 Jews are said to have been put to a cruel death. The Flagellants entered that place in August; the Jews, on this occasion, fell out with the Christians, and killed several; but when they saw their inability to withstand the increasing superiority of their enemies, and that nothing could save them from destruction, they consumed themselves and their families, by setting fire to their dwellings. Thus also, in other places, the entry of the Flagellants gave rise to scenes of slaughter; and as thirst for blood was everywhere combined with an unbridled spirit of proselytism, a fanatic zeal arose among the Jews to perish as martyrs of their ancient religion. And how was it possible that they could from the heart embrace Christianity, when its precepts were never more outrageously violated? At Esslingen, the whole Jewish community burned themselves in their synagogue; \* and mothers were often seen throwing their children on the pile, to prevent their being baptized, and then precipitating themselves into the flames.† In short, whatever deeds of fanaticism, revenge, avarice, and desperation, in fearful combination, could instigate mankind to perform,—and where in such a case is the limit?—were executed in the year 1349, throughout Germany, Italy, and France, with impunity, and in the eyes of all the world. It seemed as if the plague gave rise to scandalous

\* *Albert. Argentin.*—*Königshoven*, loc. cit.

† "This was also the poison that killed the Jews," observes *Königshoven*, which he illustrates by saying, that their increase in Germany was very great, and their mode of gaining a livelihood, which, however, was the only resource left them, had engendered ill-will against them in all quarters.

‡ Many wealthy Jews, for example, were, on their way to the stake, stripped of their garments, for the sake of the gold coin that was sewed in them.—*Albert. Argentinens.*

\* *Spangenberg*, loc. cit.

† *Guillelm. de Nangis.*—*Dlugoss*, loc. cit.



acts and frantic tumults, not to mourning and grief: and the greater part of those who, by their education and rank, were called upon to raise the voice of reason, themselves led on the savage mob to murder and to plunder. Almost all the Jews who saved their lives by baptism, were afterward burnt at different times; for they continued to be accused of poisoning the water and the air. Christians also, whom philanthropy or gain had induced to offer them protection, were put on the rack and executed with them.\* Many Jews who had embraced Christianity, repented of their apostasy,—and, returning to their former faith, sealed it with their death.†

The humanity and prudence of Clement VI. must on this occasion also be mentioned to his honor; but even the highest ecclesiastical power was insufficient to restrain the unbridled fury of the people. He not only protected the Jews at Avignon, as far as lay in his power, but also issued two bulls, in which he declared them innocent; and admonished all Christians, though without success, to cease from such groundless persecutions.‡ The Emperor Charles IV. was also favorable to them, and sought to avert their destruction, wherever he could; but he dared not draw the sword of justice, and even found himself obliged to yield to the selfishness of the Bohemian nobles, who were unwilling to forego so favorable an opportunity of releasing themselves from their Jewish creditors, under favor of an imperial mandate.§ Duke Albert of Austria, burned and pillaged those of his cities which had persecuted the Jews, —a vain and inhuman proceeding which, moreover, is not exempt from the suspicion of covetousness; yet he was unable, in his own fortress of

Kyberg, to protect some hundreds of Jews, who had been received there, from being barbarously burnt by the inhabitants.\* Several other princes and counts, among whom was Ruprecht of the Palatinate, took the Jews under their protection, on the payment of large sums: in consequence of which they were called "Jew-masters," and were in danger of being attacked by the populace and by their powerful neighbors.† These persecuted and ill-used people, except indeed where humane individuals took compassion on them at their own peril, or when they could command riches to purchase protection, had no place of refuge left but the distant country of Lithuania, where Boleslav V., Duke of Poland (1227-1279), had before granted them liberty of conscience; and King Casimir the Great (1333-1370), yielding to the entreaties of Esther, a favorite Jewess, received them, and granted them further protection:‡ on which account, that country is still inhabited by a great number of Jews, who by their secluded habits have, more than any people in Europe, retained the manners of the middle ages.

\* Anonym. *Leobiens*, in *Pes.* loc. cit.

† *Spangenberg*. In the Margrave, the Jews were no better off than in the rest of Germany. Margrave Ludwig, the Roman, even countenanced their persecutions, of which *Kehrberg*, loc. cit. 241, gives the following official account: *Coram cunctis Christi fidelibus presentia percepturis, ego Johannes dictus de Wedel Advocatus in clyti Principis Domini Ludovici, Marchionis, publice profiteor et recognosco, quod nomine Domini mei civitatem Königsberg visitavi et intravi, et ex parte Domini Marchionis Consulibus ejusdem civitatis in adjutorium mihi assumtis, Judæos inibi morantes igne cremavi, bonaque omnia eorundem Judæorum ex parte Domini mei totaliter usurpavi et assumsi. In cujus testimonium presentibus meum sigillum appendi. Datum A.D. 1351, in Vigilia S. Matthæi Apostoli.*

‡ *Basnage*, *Histoire des Juifs*. A la Haye, 1716. 8vo. T. IX. Part. 2. Liv. IX. Chap. 23. §. 12. 24. pp. 664. 679. This valuable work gives an interesting account of the state of the Jews of the middle ages. Compare *J. M. Joset's History of the Israelites from the time of the Maccabees to the present day*. T. VII. Berlin, 1827. 8vo. pp. 8. 262.

\* *Albert. Argentineus*.

† *Spangenberg* describes a similar scene which took place at Kostnitz.

‡ *Guillelm. de Nang.—Raynald*.

§ *Histor. Landgrav. Thuring. in Pistor.* loc. cit. Vol. I. p. 948.



But to return to the fearful accusations against the Jews; it was reported in all Europe, that they were in connection with secret superiors in Toledo, to whose decrees they were subject, and from whom they had received commands respecting the coining of base money, poisoning, the murder of Christian children, etc.; \* that they received the poison by sea from remote parts, and also prepared it themselves from spiders, owls, and other venomous animals; but, in order that their secret might not be discovered, that it was known only to their Rabbis and rich men.† Apparently there were but few who did not consider this extravagant accusation well founded; indeed, in many writings of the 14th century, we find great acrimony with regard to the suspected poisoners, which plainly demonstrates the prejudice existing against them. Unhappily, after the confessions of the first victims in Switzerland, the rack extorted similar ones in various places. Some even acknowledged having received poisonous powder in bags, and injunctions from Toledo, by secret messengers. Bags of this description were also often found in wells, though it was not unfrequently discovered that the Christians themselves had thrown them in; probably to give occasion to murder and pilage similar instances of which may be found in the persecutions of the witches.‡

\* *Albert. Argentinens.*

† *Hermann. Gygis. loc. cit.*

‡ On this subject see *Königshoven*, who has preserved some very valuable original proceedings. The most important are, the criminal examinations of ten Jews, at Chillon, on the Lake of Geneva, held in September and October, 1348.—See Appendix. They produced the most strange confessions, and sanctioned, by the false name of justice, the blood-thirsty fanaticism which lighted the funeral piles. Copies of these proceedings were sent to Bern and Strasburg, where they gave rise to the first persecutions against the Jews.—See also the original document of the offensive and defensive Alliance between *Berthold von Gütz*, Bishop of Strasburg, and many powerful lords and nobles, in favor of the city of Strasburg, against Charles IV. The latter saw himself compelled, in conse-

This picture needs no additions. A lively image of the Black Plague, and of the moral evil which followed in its train, will vividly represent itself to him who is acquainted with nature and the constitution of society. Almost the only credible accounts of the manner of living, and of the ruin which occurred in private life, during this pestilence, are from Italy; and these may enable us to form a just estimate of the general state of families in Europe, taking into consideration what is peculiar in the manners of each country.

"When the evil had become universal" (says Boccaccio, speaking of Florence), "the hearts of all the inhabitants were closed to feelings of humanity. They fled from the sick and all that belonged to them, hoping by these means to save themselves. Others shut themselves up in their houses, with their wives, their children and households, living on the most costly food, but carefully avoiding all excess. None were allowed access to them; no intelligence of death or sickness was permitted to reach their ears; and they spent their time in singing and music, and other pastimes. Others, on the contrary, considered eating and drinking to excess, amusements of all descriptions, the indulgence of every gratification, and an indifference to what was passing around them, as the best medicine, and acted accordingly. They wandered day and night from one tavern to another, and feasted without moderation or bounds. In this way they endeavored to avoid all contact with the sick, and abandoned their houses and property to chance, like men whose death-knell had already tolled.

"Amid this general lamentation and woe, the influence and authority

quence, to grant to that city an amnesty for the Jewish persecutions, which in our days would be deemed disgraceful to an imperial crown. Not to mention many other documents, which no less clearly show the spirit of the 14th century, p. 1021. f.



of every law, human and divine, vanished. Most of those who were in office, had been carried off by the plague, or lay sick, or had lost so many members of their families, that they were unable to attend to their duties; so that thenceforth every one acted as he thought proper. Others, in their mode of living, chose a middle course. They ate and drank what they pleased, and walked abroad, carrying odoriferous flowers, herbs or spices, which they smelt at from time to time, in order to invigorate the brain, and to avert the baneful influence of the air, infected by the sick, and by the innumerable corpses of those who had died of the plague. Others carried their precaution still further, and thought the surest way to escape death was by flight. They therefore left the city; women as well as men abandoning their dwellings, and their relations, and retiring into the country. But of these, also, many were carried off, most of them alone and deserted by all the world, themselves having previously set the example. Thus it was, that one citizen fled from another—a neighbor from his neighbors—a relation from his relations; and in the end, so completely had terror extinguished every kindlier feeling, that the brother forsook the brother—the sister the sister—the wife her husband; and at last, even the parent his own offspring, and abandoned them, unvisited and unsoothed, to their fate. Those, therefore, that stood in need of assistance fell a prey to greedy attendants; who, for an exorbitant recompense, merely handed the sick their food and medicine, remained with them in their last moments, and then not unfrequently became themselves victims to their avarice, and lived not to enjoy their extorted gain. Propriety and decorum were extinguished among the helpless sick. Females of rank seemed to forget their natural bashfulness, and committed the care of their persons, indiscriminately, to men and women of the lowest order. No longer were women, relatives or friends, found in

the houses of mourning, to share the grief of the survivors—no longer was the corpse accompanied to the grave by neighbors and a numerous train of priests, carrying wax tapers and singing psalms, nor was it borne along by other citizens of equal rank. Many breathed their last without a friend to comfort them in their last moments; and few indeed were they who departed amid the lamentations and tears of their friends and kindred. Instead of sorrow and mourning, appeared indifference, frivolity, and mirth; this being considered, especially by the females, as conducive to health. Seldom was the body followed by even ten or twelve attendants; and instead of the usual bearers and sextons, hirelings of the lowest of the populace undertook the office for the sake of gain; and accompanied by only a few priests, and often without a single taper, it was borne to the very nearest church, and lowered into the first grave that was not already too full to receive it. Among the middling classes, and especially among the poor, the misery was still greater. Poverty or negligence induced most of these to remain in their dwellings, or in the immediate neighborhood; and thus they fell by thousands, and many ended their lives in the streets, by day and by night. The stench of putrefying corpses was often the first indication to their neighbors that more deaths had occurred. The survivors, to preserve themselves from infection, generally had the bodies taken out of the houses, and laid before the doors; where the early morn found them in heaps, exposed to the affrighted gaze of the passing stranger. It was no longer possible to have a bier for every corpse,—three or four were generally laid together—husband and wife, father and mother, with two or three children, were frequently borne to the grave on the same bier; and it often happened that two priests would accompany a coffin, bearing the cross before it, and be joined on the way by several other funerals; so that



instead of one, there were five or six bodies for interment."

Thus far Boccaccio. On the conduct of the priests, another contemporary observes:\* "In large and small towns, they had withdrawn themselves through fear, leaving the performance of ecclesiastical duties to the few who were found courageous and faithful enough to undertake them." But we ought not on that account to throw more blame on them than on others; for we find proofs of the same timidity and heartlessness in every class. During the prevalence of the Black Plague, the mendicant orders conducted themselves admirably, and did as much good as can be done by individual bodies, in times of great misery and destruction; when compassion, courage, and nobler feelings, are found but in the few, while cowardice, selfishness, and ill-will, with the baser passions in their train, assert the supremacy. In place of virtue which had been driven from the earth, wickedness everywhere reared her rebellious standard, and succeeding generations were consigned to the dominion of her baleful tyranny.

## CHAPTER VI.

### PHYSICIANS.

IF we now turn to the medical talent which encountered the "*Great Mortality*," the middle ages must stand excused, since even the moderns are of opinion that the art of medicine is not able to cope with the Oriental plague, and can afford deliverance from it only under particularly favorable circumstances.† We must bear in mind also, that human science and art appear particularly weak in great pestilences, because they have to contend with the powers of nature, of which they have no

knowledge; and which, if they had been, or could be, comprehended in their collective effects, would remain uncontrollable by them, principally on account of the disordered condition of human society. Moreover, every new plague has its peculiarities, which are the less easily discovered on the first view, because, during its ravages, fear, and consternation humble the proud spirit.

The physicians of the 14th century, during the Black Death, did what human intellect could do in the actual condition of the healing art; and their knowledge of the disease was by no means despicable. They, like the rest of mankind, have indulged in prejudices, and defended them, perhaps, with too much obstinacy: some of these, however, were founded on the mode of thinking of the age, and passed current in those days, as established truths: others continue to exist to the present hour.

Their successors in the 19th century ought not therefore to vaunt too highly the pre-eminence of their knowledge, for they too will be subjected to the severe judgment of posterity—they too will, with reason, be accused of human weakness and want of foresight.

The medical faculty of Paris, the most celebrated of the 14th century, were commissioned to deliver their opinion on the causes of the Black Plague, and to furnish some appropriate regulations with regard to living, during its prevalence. This document is sufficiently remarkable to find a place here.

"We, the Members of the College of Physicians, of Paris, have, after mature consideration and consultation on the present mortality, collected the advice of our old masters in the art, and intend to make known the causes of this pestilence, more clearly than could be done according to the rules and principles of astrology and natural science; we, therefore, declare as follows:—

"It is known that in India, and the vicinity of the Great Sea, the con-

\* *Guillelm. de Nangis*, p. 110.

† "*Curationem omnem respuit pestis confirmata.*"—*Chalrin*, p. 33.



stellations which combated the rays of the sun, and the warmth of the heavenly fire, exerted their power especially against that sea, and struggled violently with its waters. (Hence, vapors often originate which envelope the sun, and convert his light into darkness.) These vapors alternately rose and fell for twenty-eight days ; but at last, sun and fire acted so powerfully upon the sea, that they attracted a great portion of it to themselves, and the waters of the ocean arose in the form of vapor ; thereby the waters were, in some parts, so corrupted, that the fish which they contained, died. These corrupted waters, however, the heat of the sun could not consume, neither could other wholesome water, hail or snow, and dew, originate therefrom. On the contrary, this vapor spread itself through the air in many places on the earth, and enveloped them in fog.

"Such was the case all over Arabia, in a part of India ; in Crete ; in the plains and valleys of Macedonia ; in Hungary, Albania, and Sicily. Should the same thing occur in Sardinia, not a man will be left alive ; and the like will continue, so long as the sun remains in the sign of Leo, on all the islands and adjoining countries to which this corrupted sea-wind extends, or has already extended from India. If the inhabitants of those parts do not employ and adhere to the following, or similar, means and precepts, we announce to them inevitable death—except the grace of Christ preserve their lives.

"We are of opinion, that the constellations, with the aid of Nature, strive, by virtue of their divine might, to protect and heal the human race ; and to this end, in union with the rays of the sun, acting through the power of fire, endeavor to break through the mist. Accordingly, within the next ten days, and until the 17th of the ensuing month of July, this mist will be converted into a stinking deleterious rain, whereby

the air will be much purified. Now, as soon as this rain shall announce itself, by thunder or hail, every one of you should protect himself from the air ; and, as well before as after the rain, kindle a large fire of vines, green laurel, or other green wood ; wormwood and chamomile should also be burnt in great quantity in the market-places, in other densely inhabited localities, and in the houses. Until the earth is again completely dry, and for three days afterward, no one ought to go abroad in the fields. During this time the diet should be simple, and people should be cautious in avoiding exposure in the cool of the evening, at night, and in the morning. Poultry and water-fowl, young pork, old beef, and fat meat in general, should not be eaten ; but on the contrary, meat of a proper age, of a warm and dry, but on no account of a heating and exciting nature. Broth should be taken, seasoned with ground pepper, ginger, and cloves, especially by those who are accustomed to live temperately, and are yet choice in their diet. Sleep in the day-time is detrimental ; it should be taken at night until sunrise, or somewhat longer. At breakfast, one should drink little ; supper should be taken an hour before sunset, when more may be drunk than in the morning. Clear light wine, mixed with a fifth or sixth part of water, should be used as a beverage. Dried or fresh fruits, with wine, are not injurious ; but highly so without it. Beet-root and other vegetables, whether eaten pickled or fresh, are hurtful ; on the contrary, spicy pot-herbs, as sage or rosemary, are wholesome. Cold, moist, watery food is in general prejudicial. Going out at night, and even early in the morning, is dangerous, on account of the dew. Only small river fish should be used. Too much exercise is hurtful. The body should be kept warmer than usual, and thus protected from moisture and cold. Rain-water must not be employed in cooking, and every one should guard against exposure to wet



weather. If it rain, a little fine treacle should be taken after dinner. Fat people should not sit in the sunshine. Good clear wine should be selected and drunk often, but in small quantities, by day. Olive oil as an article of food, is fatal. Equally injurious are fasting and excessive abstemiousness, anxiety of mind, anger, and immoderate drinking. Young people, in autumn especially, must abstain from all these things, if they do not wish to run a risk of dying of dysentery. In order to keep the body properly open, an enema, or some other simple means, should be employed, when necessary. Bathing is injurious. Men must preserve chastity as they value their lives. Every one should impress this on his recollection, but especially those who reside on the coast, or upon an island into which the noxious wind has penetrated."\*

On what occasion these strange precepts were delivered can no longer be ascertained, even if it were an object to know it. It must be acknowledged, however, that they do not redound to the credit either of the faculty of Paris, or of the 14th century in general. This famous faculty found themselves under the painful necessity of being wise at command, and of firing a point blank shot of erudition at an enemy who enveloped himself in a dark mist, of the nature of which they had no conception. In concealing their ignorance by authoritative assertions, they suffered themselves, therefore, to be misled; and while endeavoring to appear to the world with eclat, only betrayed to the intelligent their lamentable weakness. Now some might suppose, that in the condition of the sciences of the 14th century, no intelligent physicians existed; but this is altogether at variance with the laws of human advancement, and is contradicted by history. The real knowledge of an age is shown only in

the archives of its literature. Here alone the genius of truth speaks audibly—here alone men of talent deposit the results of their experience and reflection, without vanity or a selfish object. There is no ground for believing that, in the 14th century, men of this kind were publicly questioned regarding their views; and it is, therefore, the more necessary that impartial history should take up their cause and do justice to their merits.

The first notice on this subject is due to a very celebrated teacher in Perugia, Gentilis of Foligno, who, on the 18th of June, 1348, fell a sacrifice to the plague, in the faithful discharge of his duty.\* Attached to Arabian doctrines, and to the universally respected Galen, he, in common with all his contemporaries, believed in a putrid corruption of the blood in the lungs and in the heart, which was occasioned by the pestilential atmosphere, and was forthwith communicated to the whole body. He thought, therefore, that everything depended upon a sufficient purification of the air, by means of large blazing fires of odoriferous wood, in the vicinity of the healthy, as well as of the sick, and also upon an appropriate manner of living; so that the putridity might not overpower the diseased. In conformity with notions derived from the ancients, he depended upon bleeding and purging, at the commencement of the attack, for the purpose of purification; ordered the healthy to wash themselves frequently with vinegar or wine, to sprinkle their dwellings with vinegar, and to smell often at camphor, or other volatile substances. Hereupon he gave, after the Arabian fashion, detailed rules, with an abundance of different medicines, of whose healing powers wonderful things were believed. He laid little stress upon super-lunar influences, so far as respected the malady itself; on which account, he

\* *Jacob. Francischini de Ambrosiis*, in the Appendix to the *Istorie Pistolesi*, in *Muratori*, Tom. XI. p. 528.

\* *Gentilis de Fulgineo Consilia de Peste*. Cons. I. II. fol. 76, 77. Venet. 1514 fol.



did not enter into the great controversies of the astrologers, but always kept in view, as an object of medical attention, the corruption of the blood in the lungs and heart. He believed in a progressive infection from country to country, according to the notions of the present day; and the contagious power of the disease, even in the vicinity of those affected by plague, was, in his opinion, beyond all doubt.\* On this point, intelligent contemporaries were all agreed; and in truth, it required no great genius to be convinced of so palpable a fact. Besides, correct notions of contagion have descended from remote antiquity, and were maintained unchanged in the 14th century.† So far back as the age of Plato, a knowledge of the contagious power of malignant inflammations of the eye, of which also no physician of the middle ages entertained a doubt,‡ was general among the people; § yet, in modern times, surgeons have filled volumes with partial controversies on this subject. The whole language of antiquity has adapted itself to the notions of the people, respecting the contagion of pestilential diseases; and their terms were, beyond comparison, more expressive than those in use among the moderns.||

Arrangements for the protection of the healthy against contagious diseases, the necessity of which is shown from these notions, were regarded by the ancients as useful; and by many, whose circumstances permitted it,

were carried into effect in their houses. Even a total separation of the sick from the healthy, that indispensable means of protection against infection by contact, was proposed by physicians of the 2d century after Christ, in order to check the spreading of leprosy. But it was decidedly opposed, because, as it was alleged, the healing art ought not to be guilty of such harshness.\* This mildness of the ancients, in whose manner of thinking inhumanity was so often and so undisguisedly conspicuous, might excite surprise, if it were anything more than apparent. The true ground of the neglect of public protection against pestilential diseases, lay in the general notion and constitution of human society,—it lay in the disregard of human life, of which the great nations of antiquity have given proofs in every page of their history. Let it not be supposed that they wanted knowledge respecting the propagation of contagious diseases. On the contrary, they were as well informed on this subject as the moderns; but this was shown where individual property, not where human life, on the grand scale, was to be protected. Hence the ancients made a general practice of arresting the progress of murrains among cattle, by a separation of the diseased from the healthy. Their herds alone enjoyed that protection which they held it impracticable to extend to human society, because they had no wish to do so.† That the governments in the 14th century were not yet so far advanced, as to put into practice general regulations for checking the plague, needs no especial proof. Physicians could, therefore, only advise public purifications of the air by means of large fires, as had often been practiced in ancient times; and they were obliged to leave it to individual fami-

\*—"venenosa putredo circa partes cordis et pulmonis, de quibus exeunte venenoso vapore, periculum est in vicinitatibus." Cons. I. fol. 76, a.

† *Dr. Maclean's* notion that the doctrine of contagion was first promulgated in the year 1547, by Pope Paul III., etc., thus falls to the ground, together with all the arguments founded on it.—See *Maclean* on Epid. and Pestilent. Diseases, 8vo, 1817, Pt. II. Book II. ch. 3, 4.—*Transl. note.*

‡ Lippitudo contagione spectantium oculos afficit.—*Chalin de Vinario*, p. 149.

§ See the Author's *Geschichte der Heilkunde*, Vol. II. P. III.

|| Compare *Marx*, *Origines contagii*. Caroliruh. et Bad. 1824. 8.

\* *Cal. Aurelian.* Chron. L. IV. c. l. p. 497. *Ed. Amman.* "Sed hi ægrotantem destituendum magis imperant, quam curandum, quod a se alienum humanitas approbat medicinæ."

† *Geschichte der Heilkunde*, Vol. II. p. 248.



lies, either to seek safety in flight, or to shut themselves up in their dwellings,\* a method which answers in common plagues, but which here afforded no complete security, because such was the fury of the disease when it was at its height, that the atmosphere of whole cities was penetrated by the infection.

Of the astral influence which was considered to have originated the "Great Mortality," physicians and learned men were as completely convinced as of the fact of its reality. A grand conjunction of the three superior planets, Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars, in the sign of Aquarius, which took place, according to Guy de Chauliac, on the 24th of March, 1345, was generally received as its principal cause. In fixing the day, this physician, who was deeply versed in astrology, did not agree with others; whereupon there arose various disputations, of weight in that age, but of none in ours; people, however, agreed in this—that conjunctions of the planets infallibly prognosticated great events; great revolutions of kingdoms, new prophets, destructive plagues, and other occurrences which bring distress and horror on mankind. No medical author of the 14th and 15th centuries omits an opportunity of representing them as among the general prognostics of great plagues; nor can we, for our parts, regard the astrology of the middle ages as a mere offspring of superstition. It has not only, in common with all ideas which inspire and guide mankind, a high historical importance, entirely independent of its error or truth—for the influence of both is equally powerful—but there are also contained in it, as in alchemy,

grand thoughts of antiquity, of which modern natural philosophy is so little ashamed that she claims them as her property. Foremost among these, is the idea of the general life which diffuses itself throughout the whole universe, expressed by the greatest Greek sages, and transmitted to the middle ages, through the new Platonic natural philosophy. To this impression of a universal organism, the assumption of a reciprocal influence of terrestrial bodies could not be foreign,\* nor did this cease to correspond with a higher view of nature, until astrologers overstepped the limits of human knowledge with frivolous and mystical calculations.

Guy de Chauliac considers the influence of the conjunction, which was held to be all-potent, as the chief general cause of the Black Plague; and the diseased state of bodies, the corruption of the fluids, debility, obstruction, and so forth, as the especial subordinate causes.† By these, according to his opinion, the quality of the air, and of the other elements, was so altered, that they set poisonous fluids in motion toward the inward parts of the body, in the same manner as the magnet attracts iron; whence there arose in the commencement fever and the spitting of blood; afterward, however, a deposition in the form of glandular swellings and inflammatory boils. Herein the notion of an epidemic constitution was set forth clearly, and conformably to the spirit of the age. Of contagion, Guy de Chauliac was completely convinced. He sought to protect himself against it by the usual means;‡ and it was

\* This was called *Affluxus*, or *Forma specifica*, and was compared to the effect of a magnet on iron, and of amber on chaff.—*Chalin de Vinario*, p. 23.

† *Causa universalis agens—causa particularis patiens*. To this correspond, in *Chalin*, the expressions *Causa superior et inferior*.

‡ Purging with alöetic pills; bleeding; purification of the air by means of large fires; the use of treacle; frequent smelling of volatile substances, of which certain "poma" were prepared; the internal use of Armenian bole,—a plague-remedy derived from the Arabians, and, throughout the middle ages

\* *Chalin* assures us expressly, that many nunneries, by closing their gates, remained free from the contagion. It is worthy of note, and quite in conformity with the prevailing notions, that the continuance in a thick, moist atmosphere, was generally esteemed more advantageous and conservative, on account of its being more impenetrable to the astral influence, inasmuch as the inferior cause kept off the superior.—*Chalin*, p. 48.



probably he who advised Pope Clement VI. to shut himself up while the plague lasted. The preservation of this pope's life, however, was most beneficial to the city of Avignon, for he loaded the poor with judicious acts of kindness, took care to have proper attendants provided, and paid physicians himself to afford assistance wherever human aid could avail—an advantage which, perhaps, no other city enjoyed.\* Nor was the treatment of plague-patients in Avignon by any means objectionable; for, after the usual depletions by bleeding and aperients, where circumstances required them, they endeavored to bring the buboes to suppuration; they made incisions into the inflammatory boils, or burned them with a red-hot iron, a practice which at all times proves salutary, and in the Black Plague saved many lives. In this city, the Jews, who lived in a state of the greatest filth, were most severely visited, as also the Spaniards, whom Chalin accuses of great intemperance.†

Still more distinct notions on the causes of the plague were stated to his contemporaries in the 14th century, by Galeazzo di Santa Sofia, a learned man, a native of Padua, who likewise treated plague-patients at Vienna,‡ though in what year is undetermined. He distinguishes carefully *pestilence* from *epidemy* and *endemy*. The common notion of the two first accords exactly with that of an epidemic constitution, for both consist, according to him, in an unknown change or corruption of the air; with this difference, that *pestilence* calls forth diseases of different kinds; *epidemy*, on the contrary, always the same disease. As an example of an *epidemy*, he adduces a cough (influenza)

much in vogue, and very improperly used; and the employment of acescent food, in order to resist putridity. *Guy de Chauliac* appears to have recommended flight to many. Loc. citat. p. 115. Compare *Chalin*, L. II., who gives most excellent precepts on this subject.

\* *Auger. de Biterris*, loc. cit.

† L. I. c. 4. p. 39.

‡ Fol. 32. loc. cit.

which was observed in all climates at the same time, without perceptible cause; but he recognized the approach of a *pestilence*, independently of unusual natural phenomena, by the more frequent occurrence of various kinds of fever, to which the modern physicians would assign a nervous and putrid character. The *endemy* originates, according to him, only in local telluric changes—in deleterious influences which develop themselves in the earth and in the water, without a corruption of the air. These notions were variously jumbled together in his time, like everything which human understanding separates by too fine a line of limitation. The estimation of cosmical influences, however, in the *epidemy* and *pestilence* is well worthy of commendation; and Santa Sofia, in this respect, not only agrees with the most intelligent authors of the 14th and 15th centuries, but he has also promulgated an opinion which must, even now, serve as a foundation for our scarcely commenced investigations into cosmical influences.\* *Pestilence* and *epidemy* consist not in alterations of the four primary qualities,† but in a corruption of the air, powerful, though quite immaterial, and not cognoscible by the senses;—(corruptio aëris non substantialis, sed qualitativa) in a disproportion of the imponderables in the atmosphere, as it would be expressed by the moderns.‡ The causes of the *pestilence* and *epidemy* are, first of all, astral influences, especially on occasion of planetary conjunctions; then exten-

\* *Galeacii de Sancta Sophia Liber de Febris*. Venet. 1514, fol. (Printed together with *Guillelmus Brixienensis*, *Marsilius de Sancta Sophia*, *Ricardus Parisiensis*.) fol. 29. seq.

† Warmth, cold, dryness, and moisture.

‡ The talented *Chalin* entertains the same conviction, "Obscurum interdum esse vitium aëris, sub pestis initia et menses primos, hoc est argumento, quod cum nec odore tetro gravis, nec turpi colore sedatus fuerit, sed purus, tenuis, frigidus, qualis in montosis et asperis locis esse solet, et tranquillius, vehementissima sit tamen pestilentia infestaque," etc. p. 28. The most recent observers of malaria have stated nothing more than this.

sive putrefaction of animal and vegetable bodies, and terrestrial corruptions (corruptio in terra); to which also bad diet and want may contribute. Santa Sofia considers the putrefaction of locusts, that had perished in the sea and were again thrown up, combined with astral and terrestrial influences, as the cause of the pestilence in the eventful year of the "*Great Mortality*."

All the fevers which were called forth by the *pestilence*, are, according to him, of the putrid kind; for they originate principally from putridity of the heart's blood, which inevitably follows the inhalation of infected air. The Oriental Plague is, sometimes, but by no means always, occasioned by *pestilence* (?), which imparts to it a character (qualitas occulta) hostile to human nature. It originates frequently from other causes, among which, this physician was aware that contagion was to be reckoned; and it deserves to be remarked, that he held epidemic small-pox and measles to be infallible forerunners of the plague, as do the physicians and people of the East \* at the present day.

In the exposition of his therapeutic views of the plague, a clearness of intellect is again shown by Santa Sofia, which reflects credit on the age. It seemed to him to depend, 1st, on an evacuation of putrid matters, by purgatives and bleeding; yet he did not sanction the employment of these means indiscriminately, and without consideration; least of all where the condition of the blood was healthy. He also declared himself decidedly against bleeding ad deliquium (venæ sectio eradicativa). 2d, Strengthening of the heart and prevention of putrescence. 3d, Appropriate regimen. 4th, Improvement of the air. 5th, Appropriate treatment of tumid glands and inflammatory boils, with emollient, or even stimulating poultices (mustard, lily-bulbs), as well as with red-hot gold and iron. Lastly, 6th, At

tention to prominent symptoms. The stores of the Arabian pharmacy, which he brought into action to meet all these indications, were indeed very considerable; it is to be observed, however, that, for the most part, gentle means were accumulated, which, in case of abuse, would do no harm; for the character of the Arabian system of medicine, whose principles were everywhere followed at this time, was mildness and caution. On this account, too, we cannot believe that a very prolix treatise by Marsigli di Santa Sofia,\* a contemporary relative of Galeazzo, on the prevention and treatment of plague, can have caused much harm, although perhaps, even in the 14th century, an agreeable latitude and confident assertions respecting things which no mortal has investigated, or which it is quite a matter of indifference to distinguish, were considered as proofs of a valuable practical talent.

The agreement of contemporary and later writers, shows that the published views of the most celebrated physicians of the 14th century, were those generally adopted. Among these, Chalin de Vinario is the most experienced. Though devoted to astrology, still more than his distinguished contemporary, he acknowledges the greater power of terrestrial influences, and expresses himself very sensibly on the indisputable doctrine of contagion, endeavoring thereby to apologize for many surgeons and physicians of his time, who neglected their duty.† He

\* Tractatus de Febribus, fol. 48.

† De Peste Liber, pura latinitate donatus a Jacobo Dalechampio. Lugdun. 1552. 16. p. 40. 188. "Longe tamen plurimi congressu eorum qui fuerunt in locis pestilentibus periclitantur et gravissime, quoniam e causa duplici, nempe et aëris vitio, et eorum qui versantur nobiscum, vitio. Hoc itaque modo fit, ut unius accessu in totam modo familiam, modo civitatem, modo villam, pestis invehatur." Compare p. 20, "Solæ privatorum ædes pestem sentiunt, si adeat qui in pestilenti loco versatus est."—"Nobis proximi ipsi sumus, nemoque est tanta occæcatus amentia, qui de sua salute potius quam aliorum sollicitus non sit, maxime in contagione tam cita et rapida." Rather a loose principle, which might greatly

\* Compare *Enr. de Wolmar*, Abhandlung über die Pest. Berlin, 1827. 8vo.



asserted boldly, and with truth, "*that all epidemic diseases might become contagious,\* and all fevers epidemic,*" which attentive observers of all subsequent ages have confirmed.

He delivered his sentiments on blood-letting with sagacity, as an experienced physician; yet he was unable, as may be imagined, to moderate the desire for bleeding shown by the ignorant monks. He was averse to draw blood from the veins of patients under fourteen years of age; but counteracted inflammatory excitement in them by cupping; and endeavored to moderate the inflammation of the tumid glands by leeches. Most of those who were bled, died; he therefore reserved this remedy for the plethoric; especially for the papal courtiers, and the hypocritical priests, whom he saw gratifying their sensual desires, and imitating Epicurus, while they pompously pretended to follow Christ.† He recommended burning the boils with a red-hot iron, only in the plague without fever, which occurred in single cases;‡ and was always ready to correct those over-hasty surgeons, who, with fire and violent remedies, did irremediable injury to their patients.§ Michael Savonarola, professor in Ferrara (1462), reasoning on the susceptibility of the human frame to the influence of pestilential infection, as the cause of such various modifications of disease, expresses himself as a modern physician would on this point; and an adoption of the principle of contagion, was the found-

encourage low sentiments, and much endanger the honor of the medical profession, but which in *Chalin*, who was aware of the impossibility of avoiding contagion in uncleanly dwellings, is so far excusable, that he did not apply it to himself.

\* *Morbos omnes pestilentes esse contagiosos, audacter equidem pronuntio et assevero.* p. 149.

† *Ibid.* p. 97. 166. "*Qualis (vita) esse solet eorum, qui sacerdotiorum et cultus divini pretextu, genio plus satis indulgent et obsequuntur, ac Christum speciosis titulis emmententes, Epicurum imitantur.*" Certainly a remarkable freedom of sentiment for the 14th century.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 183. 151.

§ *Ibid.* p. 159. 189.

dation of his definition of the plague.\*

No less worthy of observation are the views of the celebrated Valescus of Taranta, who, during the final visitation of the Black Death, in 1382, practiced as a physician at Montpellier, and handed down to posterity what has been repeated in innumerable treatises on plague, which were written during the 15th and 16th centuries.†

Of all these notions and views regarding the plague, whose development we have represented, there are two especially, which are prominent in historical importance:—1st, The opinion of learned physicians, that the *pestilence*, or epidemic constitution, is the *parent of various kinds of disease*; that the plague sometimes, indeed, but by no means always, originates from it; that, to speak in the language of the moderns, *the pestilence* bears the same relation to contagion, that a predisposing cause does to an occasional cause: and 2ndly, the universal conviction of the contagious power of that disease.

Contagion gradually attracted more notice: it was thought that in it, the most powerful occasional cause might be avoided; the possibility of protecting whole cities by separation became gradually more evident; and so horrifying was the recollection of the eventful year of the "*Great Mortality*," that before the close of the 14th century, ere the ill effects of the Black Plague had ceased, nations endeavored to guard against the return of this enemy, by an earnest and effectual defense.

The first regulation which was issued for this purpose, originated with Viscount Bernabo, and is dated the 17th Jan. 1374. Every plague-

\* *Canonica de Febribus, ad Raynerium Siculum, 1487, s. 1. cap. 10, sine pag. "Febris pestilentialis est febris contagiosa ex ebullitione putrefactiva in altero quatuor humorum cordi propinquorum principaliter."*

† *Valesci de Tharanta Philonium. Lugduni, 1535. S. L. VII. c. 18. fol. 401. b. seq.—Compare Astruc. Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Faculté de Médecine de Montpellier. Paris, 1767. 4. p. 208.*



patient was to be taken out of the city into the fields, there to die or to recover. Those who attended upon a plague-patient, were to remain apart for ten days, before they again associated with anybody. The priests were to examine the diseased, and point out to special commissioners the persons infected; under punishment of the confiscation of their goods, and of being burned alive. Whoever imported the plague, the state condemned his goods to confiscation. Finally, none, except those who were appointed for that purpose, were to attend plague-patients, under penalty of death and confiscation.\*

These orders, in correspondence with the spirit of the 14th century, are sufficiently decided to indicate a recollection of the good effects of confinement, and of keeping at a distance those suspected of having plague. It was said that Milan itself, by a rigorous barricado of three houses in which the plague had broken out, maintained itself free from the "*Great Mortality*," for a considerable time; † and examples of the preservation of individual families, by means of a strict separation, were certainly very frequent. That these orders must have caused universal affliction from their uncommon severity, as we know to have been especially the case in the city of Regio, may be easily conceived; but Bernabo did not suffer himself to be deterred from his purpose by fear—on the contrary, when the plague returned in the year 1383, he forbade the admission of people from infected places into his territories, on pain of death.‡ We have now, it is true, no account how far he succeeded, yet it is to be supposed that he arrested the

disease, for it had long lost the property of the Black Death, to spread abroad in the air the contagious matter which proceeded from the lungs, charged with putridity, and to taint the atmosphere of whole cities by the vast numbers of the sick. Now that it had resumed its milder form, so that it infected only by contact, it admitted of being confined within individual dwellings, as easily as in modern times.

Bernabo's example was imitated; nor was there any century more appropriate for recommending to governments strong regulations against the plague, than the 14th; for when it broke out in Italy, in the year 1399, and still demanded new victims, it was for the 16th time; without reckoning frequent visitations of measles and small-pox. In this same year, Viscount John, in milder terms than his predecessor, ordered that no stranger should be admitted from infected places, and that the city gates should be strictly guarded. Infected houses were to be ventilated for at least eight or ten days, and purified from noxious vapors by fires, and by fumigations with balsamic and aromatic substances. Straw, rags, and the like, were to be burned; and the bedsteads which had been used, set out for four days in the rain or the sunshine, so that, by means of the one or the other, the morbid vapor might be destroyed. No one was to venture to make use of clothes or beds out of infected dwellings, unless they had been previously washed and dried either at the fire or in the sun. People were, likewise, to avoid, as long as possible, occupying houses which had been frequented by plague-patients.\*

We cannot precisely perceive in these an advance toward general regulations; and perhaps people were convinced of the insurmountable impediments which opposed the separation of open inland countries, where bodies of people connected together

\* *Chronicon Regiense, Muratori, Tom. XVIII. p. 82.*

† *Adr. Chenot, Hinterlassene Abhandlungen über die ärztlichen und politischen Anstalten bei der Pestseuche.*—Wien, 1798, 8vo. p. 146. From this period it was common in the middle ages to barricade the doors and windows of houses infected with plague, and to suffer the inhabitants to perish without mercy.—*S. Möhsen, loc. cit.*

‡ *Chron. Reg. loc. cit.*

\* *Muratori, Tom. XVI. p. 560.*—Compare *Chenot, loc. cit. p. 146.*



could not be brought, even by the most obdurate severity, to renounce the habit of a profitable intercourse.

Doubtless it is nature which has done the most to banish the Oriental plague from western Europe, where the increasing cultivation of the earth, and the advancing order in civilized society, have prevented it from remaining domesticated; which it most probably was in the more ancient times.

In the 15th century, during which it broke out seventeen times in different places in Europe,\* it was of the more consequence to oppose a barrier to its entrance from Asia, Africa, and Greece (which had become Turkish); for it would have been difficult for it to maintain itself indigenously any longer. Among the southern commercial states, however, which were called on to make the greatest exertions to this end, it was principally Venice, formerly so severely attacked by the Black Plague, that put the necessary restraint upon the perilous profits of the merchant. Until toward the end of the 15th century, the very considerable intercourse with the East was free and unimpeded. Ships of commercial cities had often brought over the plague: nay, the former irruption of the "*Great Mortality*" itself had been occasioned by navigators. For, as in the latter end of Autumn, 1347, four ships full of plague-patients returned from the Levant to Genoa, the disease spread itself there with astonishing rapidity. On this account, in the following year, the Genoese forbade the entrance of suspected ships into their port. These sailed to Pisa and other cities on the coast, where already nature had made such mighty preparations for the reception of the Black Plague, and what we have already described took place in consequence.†

In the year 1485, when, among the cities of northern Italy, Milan especially felt the scourge of the plague, a special council of health, consisting of

three nobles, was established at Venice, who probably tried everything in their power to prevent the entrance of this disease, and gradually called into activity all those regulations which have served in later times as a pattern for the other southern states of Europe. Their endeavors were, however, not crowned with complete success; on which account their powers were increased, in the year 1504, by granting them the power of life and death over those who violated the regulations.\* Bills of health were probably first introduced in the year 1527, during a fatal plague† which visited Italy for five years (1525-30), and called forth redoubled caution.

The first lazarettos were established upon islands at some distance from the city, seemingly as early as the year 1485. Here all strangers coming from places where the existence of plague was suspected were detained. If it appeared in the city itself, the sick were dispatched with their families to what was called the Old Lazaretto, were there furnished with provisions and medicines, and, when they were cured, were detained, together with all those who had had intercourse with them, still forty days longer in the New Lazaretto, situated on another island. All these regulations were every year improved, and their needful rigor was increased, so that from the year 1585 onward, no appeal was allowed from the sentence of the Council of Health; and the other commercial nations gradually came to the support of the Venetians, by adopting corresponding regulations.‡ Bills of health, however, were not general until the year 1665.§

The appointment of a forty-days' detention, whence quarantines derive their name, was not dictated by ca-

\* Papon, loc. cit.

† Chenot, p. 145.

\* *Le Bret*, Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig. Riga, 1775. 4, Part II. Div. 2. p. 752.

† *Zagata*, Cronica di Verona, 1744. 4, III. p. 93.

‡ *Le Bret*, loc. cit. Comp. Hamburger Remarquens of the year 1700, pp. 282 and 305.

§ Göttinger gelehrte Anzeigen, 1772, p. 22.

price, but probably had a medical origin, which is derivable in part from the doctrine of critical days; for the fortieth day, according to the most ancient notions, has been always regarded as the last of ardent diseases, and the limit of separation between these and those which are chronic. It was the custom to subject lying-in women for forty days to a more exact superintendence. There was a good deal also said in medical works of forty-day epochs in the formation of the fœtus, not to mention that the alchemists expected more durable revolutions in forty days, which period they called the philosophical month.

This period being generally held to prevail in natural processes, it appeared reasonable to assume, and legally to establish it, as that required for the development of latent principles of contagion, since public regula-

tions cannot dispense with decisions of this kind, even though they should not be wholly justified by the nature of the case. Great stress has likewise been laid on theological and legal grounds, which were certainly of greater weight in the fifteenth century than in modern times.\*

On this matter, however, we cannot decide, since our only object here is to point out the origin of a political means of protection against a disease, which has been the greatest impediment to civilization within the memory of man; a means, that, like Jenner's vaccine, after the small-pox had ravaged Europe for twelve hundred years, has diminished the check which mortality puts on the progress of civilization, and thus given to the life and manners of the nations of this part of the world a new direction, the result of which we cannot foretell.

## APPENDIX.

### I.

#### THE ANCIENT SONG OF THE FLAGELLANTS.

ACCORDING TO MASSMANN'S EDITION, COMPARED WITH THE MS. BY  
PROFESSOR LACHMANN.

##### (Original.)

- SVE siner sele wille pleghen  
De sal gelden unde weder geuen  
So wert siner sele raed  
Des help uns leue herre goed  
5 Nu tredet here we botsen wille  
Vle wi io de hetsen helle  
Lucifer is en bose geselle  
Sven her hauet  
Mit peke he en lauet  
10 Datz vle wi ef wir hauen sin  
Des help uns maria koninghin  
Das wir dines kindes hulde win  
Jesus crist de wart ke vanghen  
An en cruce wart he ge hanghen  
15 Dat cruce wart des blodes rod  
Wer klaghen sin marter unde sin dod

##### (Translation.)

- WHOE'ER to save his soul is fain,  
Must pay and render back again.  
His safety so shall he consult:  
Help us, good Lord, to this result.  
5 Ye that repent your crimes, draw nigh.  
From the burning hell we fly,  
From Satan's wicked company.  
Whom he leads  
With pitch he feeds.  
10 If we be wise we this shall flee.  
Maria! Queen! we trust in thee,  
To move thy Son to sympathy.  
Jesus Christ was captive led,  
And to the cross was riveted.  
15 The cross was reddened with his gore  
And we his martyrdom deplore.

\* The forty days' duration of the Flood, the forty days' sojourn of Moses on Mount Sinai, Jesus's fast for the same length of time in the wilderness; lastly, what is called the Saxon term (*Sächsische Frist*), which lasts for forty days, etc. Compare *G. W. Wedel, Centuria Exercitationum Medico-philologicarum: De Quadragesima Medica. Jenæ, 1701. 4. Dec. IV. p. 16.*



Sunder war mide wilt tu mi lonen  
 Dre negele unde en dornet crone  
 Das cruce vrone en sper en stich  
 30 Sunder datz leyd ich dor dich  
 Was wiltu nu liden dor mich  
 So rope wir herre mit luden done  
 Unsen denst den nem to lone  
 Be hode uns vor der helle nod  
 25 Des bidde wi dich dor dinen dod  
 Dor god vor gete wi unse blot  
 Dat is uns tho den suden guot  
 Maria muoter koninginghe  
 Dor dines leuen kides minne  
 30 Al unse nod si dir ghe klaghet  
 Des help uns moter maghet reyne.  
 De erde beuet och kleuen de steyne  
 Lebe hertze du salt weyne  
 Wir wenen trene mit den oghen  
 35 Unde hebben des so guden louen  
 Mit unsen sinnen unde mit hertzen  
 Dor uns leyd crist vil manighen smert-  
 zen  
 Nu slaed w sere  
 Dor cristus ere.  
 40 Dor god nu latet de sunde mere  
 Dor god nu latet de sunde varen  
 Se wil sich god ouer uns en barmen  
 Maria stund in grotzen noden  
 Do se ire leue kint sa doden  
 45 En svert dor ire sele snet  
 Sunder dat la di wesen led  
 In korter vrist  
 God tornich ist  
 Jesus wart gelauet mid gallen  
 50 Des sole wi an en cruce vallen  
 Er heuet uch mit uwen armen  
 Dat sic god ouer uns en barme  
 Jesus dorch dine namen dry  
 Nu make uns hir van sunde vry  
 55 Jesus dor dine wden rod  
 Be hod uns vor den gehen dod  
 Dat he sende sinen geist  
 Und uns dat kortelike leist  
 De vrowe unde man ir e tobreken  
 60 Dat wil god selven an en wreken  
 Sveuel pik und och de galle  
 Dat gutet de duuel in se alle  
 Vor war sint se des duuels spot  
 Dor vor behode uns herre god  
 65 De e de ist en reyne leuen  
 De had uns god selven gheuen  
 Ich rade uch vrowen unde mannen  
 Dor god gy solen houard annen  
 Des biddet uch de arme sele  
 70 Dorch god nu latet houard mere  
 Dor god nu latet houard varen  
 So wil sich god ouer uns en barmen  
 Cristus rep in hemelrike  
 Sinen engelen al gelike.  
 75 De cristenheit wil mi ent wichen  
 Des wil lan och se vor gaen  
 Marie bat ire kint so sere  
 Leue kint la se di boten  
 Dat wil ich sceppen dat se moten  
 80 Bekeran sich.  
 Des bidde ich dich

"Sinner, canst thou to me atone?  
 Three pointed nails, a thorn crown,  
 The holy cross, a spear, a wound,  
 20 These are the cruel pangs I found.  
 What wilt thou, sinner, bear for me?"  
 Lord, with loud voice we answer thee,  
 Accept our service in return,  
 And save us lest in hell we burn.  
 25 We, through thy death, to thee have sued.  
 For God in heaven we shed our blood:  
 This for our sins will work to good.  
 Blessed Maria! Mother! Queen!  
 Through thy loved Son's redeeming mean  
 30 Be all our wants to thee portrayed.  
 Aid us, Mother! spotless maid!  
 Trembles the earth, the rocks are rent,\*  
 Fond heart of mine, thou must relent.  
 Tears from our sorrowing eyes we weep;  
 35 Therefore so firm our faith we keep  
 With all our hearts—with all our senses.  
 Christ bore his pangs for our offenses.  
 Ply well the scourge for Jesus' sake,  
 And God through Christ your sins shall  
 take.  
 40 For love of God abandon sin.  
 To mend your vicious lives begin,  
 So shall we his mercy win.  
 Direful was Maria's pain  
 When she beheld her dear One slain.  
 45 Pierced was her soul as with a dart:  
 Sinner, let this affect thy heart.  
 The time draws near  
 When God in anger shall appear.  
 Jesus was refreshed with gall:  
 50 Prostrate crosswise let us fall,  
 Then with uplifted arms arise,  
 That God with us may sympathize.  
 Jesus, by thy titles three,†  
 From our bondage set us free.  
 55 Jesus, by thy precious blood,  
 Save us from the fiery flood.  
 Lord, our helplessness defend,  
 And to our aid thy Spirit send.  
 If man and wife their vows should break  
 60 God will on such his vengeance wreak.  
 Brimstone and pitch, and mingled gall,  
 Satan pours on such sinners all.  
 Truly, the devil's scorn are they:  
 Therefore, O Lord, thine aid we pray.  
 65 Wedlock's an honorable tie  
 Which God himself doth sanctify.  
 By this warning, man, abide,  
 God shall surely punish pride.  
 Let your precious soul entreat you,  
 70 Lay down pride lest vengeance meet you.  
 I do beseech ye, pride forsake,  
 So God on us shall pity take.  
 Christ in heaven, where he commands,  
 Thus addressed his angel bands:—  
 75 "Christendom dishonors me,  
 Therefore her ruin I decree."  
 Then Mary thus implored her Son:—  
 "Penance to thee, loved Child, be done;  
 That she repent be mine the care;  
 80 Stay then thy wrath, and hear my prayer."  
 Ye liars!

\* We hence perceive with what feelings subterraneous thunders were regarded by the people.

† For the sake of thy Trinity.

Gi logenere  
 Gy meynen ed sverer  
 Gi bichten reyne und lan de sunde uch  
 ruwen  
 85 So wil sich god in uch vor nuwen  
 Owe du arme wokerere  
 Du bringest en lod up en punt  
 Dat senket din an der helle grunt  
 Ir morder und ir straten rouere  
 90 Ir sint dem leuen gode un mere  
 Ir ne wilt uch ouer nemende barmen  
 Des sin gy eweliken vor loren  
 Were dusse bote nicht ge worden  
 De cristenheit wer gar vorsunden  
 95 De leyde duuel had se ge bunden  
 Maria had lost unsen bant  
 Sunder ich saghe di leue mere  
 Sunte peter is portenere  
 Wende dich an en he letset dich in  
 100 He bringhet dich vor de koninghin  
 Leue herre sunte Michael  
 Du bist en plegher aller sel  
 Be hode uns vor der helle nod  
 Dat do dor dines sceppers dod.

Ye that break your sacrament,  
 Shrive ye thoroughly and repent.  
 Your heinous sins sincerely rue,  
 85 So shall the Lord your hearts renew.  
 Woel usurer, though thy wealt h  
 abound,  
 For every ounce thou mak'st a pound  
 Shall sink thee to the hell profound.  
 Ye murd'rers, and ye robbers all,  
 90 The wrath of God on you shall fall.  
 Mercy ye ne'er to others show,  
 None shall ye find; but endless woe.  
 Had it not been for our contrition,  
 All Christendom had met perdition.  
 95 Satan had bound her in his chain;  
 Mary hath loosed her bonds again.  
 Glad news I bring thee, sinful mortal,  
 In heaven Saint Peter keeps the portal.  
 Apply to him with suppliant mien,  
 100 He bringeth thee before thy Queen.  
 Benignant Michael, blessed saint,  
 Guardian of souls, receive our plaint.  
 Through thy Almighty Maker's death,  
 Preserve us from the hell beneath.

## II.

EXAMINATION OF THE JEWS ACCUSED  
OF POISONING THE WELLS.\*

ANSWER FROM THE CASTELLAN OF  
 CHILLON TO THE CITY OF STRAS-  
 BURG, TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF  
 THE INQUISITION AND CONFESSION  
 OF SEVERAL JEWS CONFINED IN THE  
 CASTLE OF CHILLON ON SUSPICION  
 OF POISONING. ANNO 1348.

To the Honorable the Mayor, Senate,  
 and Citizens of the City of Stras-  
 burg, the Castellan of Chillon, Dep-  
 uty of the Bailiff of Chablais, send-  
 eth greeting with all due submission  
 and respect.

Understanding that you desire to  
 be made acquainted with the confes-  
 sion of the Jews, and the proofs  
 brought forward against them, I certi-  
 fy, by these presents, to you, and each  
 of you that desires to be informed,  
 that they of Berne have had a copy of

\* An appearance of justice having been  
 given to all later persecutions by these pro-  
 ceedings, they deserve to be recorded as im-  
 portant historical documents. The original  
 is in Latin, but we have preferred the German  
 translation in Könighshoven's Chronicle, p.  
 1029.

the inquisition and confession of the  
 Jews who lately resided in the places  
 specified, and who were accused of  
 putting poison into the wells and  
 several other places: as also the most  
 conclusive evidence of the truth of  
 the charge preferred against them.  
 Many Jews were put to the question,  
 others being excused from it, because  
 they confessed, and were brought to  
 trial and burnt. Several Christians,  
 also, who had poison given them by  
 the Jews for the purpose of destroy-  
 ing the Christians, were put on the  
 wheel and tortured. This burning of  
 the Jews and torturing of the said  
 Christians took place in many parts  
 of the county of Savoy.

Fare you well.

THE CONFESSION MADE ON THE 15TH  
 DAY OF SEPTEMBER, IN THE YEAR OF  
 OUR LORD 1348, IN THE CASTLE OF  
 CHILLON, BY THE JEWS ARRESTED  
 IN NEUSTADT, ON THE CHARGE OF  
 POISONING THE WELLS, SPRINGS, AND  
 OTHER PLACES; ALSO FOOD, ETC.,  
 WITH THE DESIGN OF DESTROYING  
 AND EXTIRPATING ALL CHRISTIANS.

I. Balavignus, a Jewish physician,  
 inhabitant of Thonon, was arrested at



Chillon in consequence of being found in the neighborhood. He was put for a short time to the rack, and on being taken down, confessed, after much hesitation, that, about ten weeks before, the Rabbi Jacob of Toledo, who, because of a citation, had resided at Chamberi since Easter, sent him, by a Jewish boy, some poison in the mummy of an egg: it was a powder sewed up in a thin leathern pouch accompanied by a letter, commanding him on penalty of excommunication, and by his required obedience to the law, to throw this poison into the larger and more frequented wells of the town of Thonon, to poison those who drew water there. He was further enjoined not to communicate the circumstance to any person whatever, under the same penalty. In conformity with this command of the Jewish rabbis and doctors of the law, he, Balavignus, distributed the poison in several places, and acknowledged having one evening placed a certain portion under a stone in a spring on the shore at Thonon. He further confessed that the said boy brought various letters of a similar import, addressed to others of his nation, and particularly specified some directed severally to Mossoiet, Banditon, and Samoletto, of Neustadt; to Musseo Abramo and Aquetus of Montreantz, Jews residing at Thurn in Vivey; to Benetonus and his son at St. Moritz; to Vivianus Jacobus, Aquetus and Sonetus, Jews at Aquani.—Several letters of a like nature were sent to Abram and Musset, Jews at Moncheoli; and the boy told him that he had taken many others to different and distant places, but he did not recollect to whom they were addressed. Balavignus further confessed that, after having put the poison into the spring at Thonon, he had positively forbidden his wife and children to drink the water, but had not thought fit to assign a reason. He avowed the truth of this statement, and, in the presence of several credible witnesses, swore by his Law, and the Five Books of Moses, to every item of his deposition.

On the day following, Balavignus, voluntarily and without torture, ratified the above confession verbatim before many persons of character, and, of his own accord, acknowledged that on returning one day from Tour near Vivey, he had thrown into a well below Mustruez, namely, that of La Cone-rayde, a quantity of the poison tied up in a rag, given to him for the purpose by Aquetus of Montreantz, an inhabitant of the said Tour: that he had acquainted Manssiono, and his son Delosaz, residents of Neustadt, with the circumstance of his having done so, and advertised them not to drink of the water. He described the color of the poison as being red and black.

On the nineteenth day of September, the above-named Balavignus confessed, without torture, that about three weeks after Whitsuntide, a Jew named Mussus told him that he had thrown poison into the well, in the custom-house of that place, the property of the Borneller family; and that he no longer drank the water of this well, but that of the lake. He further deposed that Mussus informed him that he had also laid some of the poison under the stones in the custom-house at Chillon. Search was accordingly made in this well, and the poison found: some of it was given to a Jew by way of trial, and he died in consequence. He also stated that the rabbis had ordered him and other Jews to refrain from drinking of the water for nine days after the poison was infused into it; and immediately on having poisoned the waters, he communicated the circumstance to the other Jews. He, Balavignus, confessed that about two months previously, being at Evian, he had some conversation on the subject with a Jew called Jacob, and among other things, asked him whether he also had received writings and poison, and was answered in the affirmative; he then questioned him whether he had obeyed the command, and Jacob replied that he had not, but had given the poison to Savetus, a Jew, who had thrown it into the well de Morer at Evian.



Jacob also desired him, Balavignus, to execute the command imposed on him with due caution. He confessed that Aquetus of Montreantz had informed him that he had thrown some of the poison into the well above Tour, the water of which he sometimes drank. He confessed that Samolet had told him that he had laid the poison which he had received in a well, which, however, he refused to name to him. Balavignus, as a physician, further deposed that a person infected by such poison coming in contact with another while in a state of perspiration, infection would be the almost inevitable result; as might also happen from the breath of an infected person. This fact he believed to be correct, and was confirmed in his opinion by the attestation of many experienced physicians. He also declared that none of his community could exculpate themselves from this accusation, as the plot was communicated to all; and that all were guilty of the above charges. Balavignus was conveyed over the lake from Chillon to Clarens, to point out the well into which he confessed having thrown the powder. On landing, he was conducted to the spot; and, having seen the well, acknowledged that to be the place, saying, "This is the well into which I put the poison." The well was examined in his presence, and the linen cloth in which the poison had been wrapped was found in the waste-pipe by a notary-public named Heinrich Gerhard, in the presence of many persons, and was shown to the said Jew. He acknowledged this to be the linen which had contained the poison, which he described as being of two colors, red and black, but said that he had thrown it into the open well. The linen cloth was taken away and is preserved.

Balavignus, in conclusion, attests the truth of all and everything as above related. He believes this poison to contain a portion of the basilisk, because he had heard, and felt assured, that the above poison could not be prepared without it.

II. Banditono, a Jew of Neustadt, was, on the fifteenth day of September, subjected for a short time to the torture. After a long interval, he confessed having cast a quantity of poison, about the size of a large nut, given him by Musseus, a Jew, at Tour, near Vivey, into the well of Carutet, in order to poison those who drank of it.

The following day, Banditono, voluntarily and without torture, attested the truth of the aforesaid deposition; and also confessed that the Rabbi Jacob von Pasche, who came from Toledo and had settled at Chamberi, sent him, at Pilliex, by a Jewish servant, some poison about the size of a large nut, together with a letter, directing him to throw the powder into the wells on pain of excommunication. He had therefore thrown the poison, which was sewn up in a leathern bag, into the well of Cercliti de Roch; further, also, that he saw many other letters in the hands of the servant addressed to different Jews: that he had also seen the said servant deliver one, on the outside of the upper gate, to Samuletus, the Jew, at Neustadt. He stated, also, that the Jew, Massolet, had informed him that he had put poison into the well near the bridge at Vivey.

III. The said Manssion, Jew of Neustadt, was put upon the rack on the fifteenth day of the same month, but refused to admit the above charge, protesting his entire ignorance of the whole matter, but the day following, he, voluntarily and without any torture, confessed, in the presence of many persons, that he came from Mancheolo one day in last Whitsun-week, in company with a Jew named Provenzal, and, on reaching the well of Chabloz Crüz between Vyona and Mura, the latter said, "You must put some of the poison which I will give you into that well, or woe betide you!" He therefore took a portion of the powder about the bigness of a nut, and did as he was directed. He believed that the Jews in the neighborhood of Evian had convened a council among themselves relative to this



plot, before Whitsuntide. He further said that Balavignus had informed him of his having poisoned the well de la Conerayde below Mustruetz. He also affirmed his conviction of the culpability of the Jews in this affair, stating that they were fully acquainted with all the particulars, and guilty of the alleged crime.

On the third day of the October following, Manssiono was brought before the commissioners, and did not in the least vary from his former deposition, or deny having put the poison into the said wells.

The above-named Jews, prior to their execution, solemnly swore by their Law to the truth of their several depositions, and declared that all Jews whatsoever, from seven years old and upward, could not be exempted from the charge of guilt, as all of them were acquainted with the plot, and more or less participators in the crime.

[The seven other examinations scarcely differ from the above, except in the names of the accused, and afford but little variety. We will, therefore, only add a characteristic passage

at the conclusion of this document. The whole speaks for itself.]

There still remain numerous proofs and accusations against the above-mentioned Jews: also against Jews and Christians in different parts of the county of Savoy, who have already received the punishment due to their heinous crime; which, however, I have not at hand, and cannot therefore send you. I must add, that all the Jews of Neustadt were burnt according to the just sentence of the law. At Augst, I was present when three Christians were flayed on account of being accessory to the plot of poisoning. Very many Christians were arrested for this crime in various places in this country, especially at Evian, Gebenne, Krusilien, and Hochstett, who at last and in their dying moments were brought to confess and acknowledge that they had received the poison from the Jews. Of these Christians some have been quartered; others flayed and afterward hanged. Certain commissioners have been appointed by the magistrates to enforce judgment against all the Jews; and I believe that none will escape.

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